Office Of Siridantamahapalaka

The Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Private Museum

Protect Dhātu • Offer Dhamma • Build Peace
16°51'58.9"N 96°0'4.9"E 16.866639, 96.1228
THE BUDDHA'S RELICS MUSEUM
Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relic Preservation Museum

Salvage Archaeology, Epigraphic Identity, and Custodial Disruption of the Three Buddha Tooth Relics at Sriparvata-Vijayapura (Nagarjunakonda)(HIRR-2026-0006)

Venerable Dhammasami

Ph.D(Thesis),M.A(Pali),Dip in Social Work,B.A

ORCID: 0009-0000-0697-4760

Copy Right By

Venerable Dhammasami

INSTITUTIONAL METADATA & MOTTO 4
LETTER OF APPRECIATION 5
ABOUT US 6
INSTITUTIONAL STATUS AND GOVERNANCE 8
MISSION 9
WHAT WE DO 10
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 11
METHODOLOGY 12
RESEARCH ETHICS 13
SCOPE AND LIMITATION 14
GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 15
LEGAL STATEMENT 16
DOCTRINAL STATEMENT 17
ABSTRACT 18
FOREWORD 19
COPYRIGHT PAGE 20
PUBLICATION RECORD 21
DEDICATION 22
BLESSING / HOMAGE 23
LIST OF FIGURES 24
LIST OF TABLES 25
ABBREVIATIONS 26
GLOSSARY 27
TIMELINE OF EVENTS 28
SECTION 1 — CASE OBJECTIVE 30
Research Questions 31
SECTION 2 — CASE PROFILE 32
SECTION 3 — HISTORICAL NARRATIVE 34
SECTION 4 — ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT 36
SECTION 5 — EVIDENCE MATRIX 39
5.1. Evidence Reliability Classification Matrix 40
5.2. Matrix Application and Analytical Constraints 41
SECTION 6 — CHAIN OF CUSTODY 42
SECTION 7 — TEXTUAL EVIDENCE 45
SECTION 8 — EPIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE 47
SECTION 9 — NUMISMATIC EVIDENCE 49
SECTION 10 — VISUAL EVIDENCE PACKAGE 50
SECTION 11 — EVIDENCE REGISTER 52

SECTION 12 — HISTORIOGRAPHICAL DISCUSSION 54
SECTION 13 — CONFIDENCE ASSESSMENT 56
SECTION 14 — RESEARCH GAPS 57
SECTION 15 — FINAL ASSESSMENT 58
SECTION 16 — INSTITUTIONAL CERTIFICATION 59
References: 60
APPENDICES 66
Appendix A — Primary Archaeological Sources 66
Appendix B — Bibliography 67
Appendix C — Numismatic Catalogue 68
Appendix D — Museum Archive Records 69
Appendix E — Photographic Plates 70
Appendix F — Registry Forms 71
Appendix G — Institutional Certificates 72
Appendix H — Verification Logs 73
Appendix I — Evidence Register 74
Appendix J — Digital Archive Registry 75
Appendix K — Maps and Geographic Documentation 76
Appendix L — Visual Intelligence Package 77
Appendix M — Special Doctrinal Documentation 78
GLOSSARY OF TERMS (အထူးဝေါဟာရ အဘိဓာန်) 79
ARCHIVE METADATA SHEET (အမြဲတမ်းမှတ်တမ်း အချက်အလက်လွှာ) 80
REVISION HISTORY (မူကွဲ ပြင်ဆင်မှုမှတ်တမ်း) 81
PRESERVATION AUDIT TRAIL (စစ်ဆေးမှု ခြေရာကောက်မှတ်တမ်း) 82
INDEX (အညွှန်းကိန်း) 83
COLOPHON & CONTACT INFORMATION (ထုတ်ဝေမှုမှတ်တမ်းနှင့် ဆက်သွယ်ရန်) ... 84

Title: Salvage Archaeology, Epigraphic Identity, and Custodial Disruption of the Three Buddha Tooth Relics at Sriparvata-Vijayapura (Nagarjunakonda)HIRR-2026-0006

Publication Type: Case Study Synthesis and Registry Entry

Project ID: HIRR-2026-0006

Registry ID: REG-2026-0006

Publication Number: PUB-2026-0006

Project Owner: Sao Dhammasami (Siridantamahāpālaka)

Researcher: Sao Dhammasami @ Bhikkhu Indasoma Siridantamahāpalaka

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0000-0697-4760

Publishing Authority: Office of Siridantamahapalaka

Institutional Affiliation: Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Private Museum (Yangon / Bangkok Operations)

Institutional ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0004-8799-7014

Publication Classification: Institutional Research Publication

Research Governance Model: Integrated Relic Custodianship Model (IRCM)

Date of Certification: June 22, 2026

INSTITUTIONAL METADATA & MOTTO

PERMANENT INSTITUTIONAL METADATA

Project Owner: Sao Dhammasami (Siridantamahāpālaka)

Researcher: Sao Dhammasami @ Bhikkhu Indasoma Siridantamahāpalaka

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0000-0697-4760

Publishing Authority: Office of Siridantamahapalaka

Institutional Affiliation: Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Private Museum (Yangon / Bangkok Operations)

Institutional ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0004-8799-7014

Publication Classification: Institutional Research Publication

Research Governance Model: Integrated Relic Custodianship Model (IRCM)

INSTITUTIONAL MOTTO

"Preserving continuity where physical context is lost; safeguarding heritage through immutable transparency, even when custodial custody fails." — Applied to the Nagarjunakonda Salvage Archives

LETTER OF APPRECIATION

The Hswagata International Relic Registry (HIRR) extends its profound appreciation to the pioneering archaeologists, epigraphers, and scholars—particularly Gabriel Jouveau-Dubreuil, A.H. Longhurst, T.N. Ramachandran, and R. Subrahmanyam—whose rigorous salvage archaeology campaigns between 1926 and 1960 ensured the extraction and documentation of the Nagarjunakonda relic assemblage. Without their exhaustive efforts, the material heritage of the ancient Ikshvaku capital of Vijayapura at Sriparvata would have been permanently erased beneath the waters of the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam.

We also acknowledge the critical contributions of the linguistic and paleographic communities. Their meticulous translations of Ikshvaku-era Brahmi inscriptions and comparative analyses of Chinese pilgrimage travelogues (such as those by Fa-Hien and Xuanzang) provided the strong primary evidence required to historically anchor this submerged site.

we express our deepest gratitude to the international heritage preservation community and the institutional partners operating under the Integrated Relic Custodianship Model (IRCM). It is through their commitment to academic rigor and uncompromising transparency that we are able to document not only the triumphs of archaeological discovery, but also the sobering realities of modern custodial disruptions. By confronting the loss of physical heritage with immutable digital record-keeping, they ensure that the historical truth of Nagarjunakonda remains secure for future generations.

ABOUT US

The Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Private Museum, operating the Hswagata International Relic Registry (HIRR), is a specialized heritage governance institution dedicated to the meticulous documentation, verification, and archival preservation of Buddhist material culture. Operating across Yangon and Bangkok, the institution strictly adheres to the Integrated Relic Custodianship Model (IRCM).

Our primary focus is safeguarding the continuity of relic veneration history and archaeological provenance, especially in instances where original physical contexts have been destroyed or custodial chains have been disrupted. By synthesizing primary salvage archaeology, epigraphic evidence, and transparent institutional registry systems, we provide an immutable digital framework that protects the historical integrity of sacred Buddhist assemblages for global academic and public access.

LEADERSHIP

Project Owner & Lead Researcher:

Sao Dhammasami (Siridantamahāpālaka) / Bhikkhu Indasoma Siridantamahāpalaka

Under the auspices of the Office of Siridantamahapalaka, the leadership of the Hswagata International Relic Registry (HIRR) is responsible for the overarching governance, methodological design, and archival integrity of the Integrated Relic Custodianship Model (IRCM).

The lead researcher directs the multi-system analytical workflows, ensuring that historical evidence, salvage archaeology data, and epigraphic records are rigorously isolated from unverified traditions. By instituting strict quality control gates and transparent reporting mechanisms, the leadership guarantees that all institutional certifications accurately reflect the documented provenance and custodial realities of sacred heritage assemblages, such as the Nagarjunakonda salvage collection.

INSTITUTIONAL STATUS AND GOVERNANCE

The Hswagata International Relic Registry (HIRR) operates as an independent, non-governmental heritage archive under the legal and operational framework of the Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Private Museum.

All archival, research, and certification activities are strictly regulated by the **Integrated Relic Custodianship Model (IRCM)**. This governing framework mandates a rigorous, multi-stage, quality-controlled workflow to ensure that primary archaeological data, academic interpretations, and traditional hypotheses are categorically separated and evaluated.

In applying this governance model to the Nagarjunakonda (Sriparvata-Vijayapura) case file, the institution enforces a policy of absolute transparency. The IRCM dictates that institutional integrity relies not on the flawless physical preservation of artifacts by past authorities, but on the flawless, immutable documentation of their history—including the objective recording of custodial failures, such as the theft of one of the salvaged tooth relics. Through this governance standard, HIRR guarantees that the digital archive remains a definitive, uncompromised source of truth.

MISSION

The primary mission of the Hswagata International Relic Registry (HIRR) is to establish and maintain an immutable, evidence-based, and transparent archival framework for the governance of Buddhist material heritage. We are committed to safeguarding the historical continuity and archaeological provenance of sacred assemblages by prioritizing rigorous documentation over traditional, physical-only custodianship.

By applying the Integrated Relic Custodianship Model (IRCM), our mission is to ensure that the factual history of heritage sites—including both the triumphs of discovery and the realities of modern custodial disruption—is permanently secured. We aim to separate primary archaeological evidence from academic interpretation and devotional hypothesis, ensuring that the true, documented history of artifacts remains globally accessible, auditable, and protected for perpetuity, even when physical custody is compromised.

WHAT WE DO

At the Hswagata International Relic Registry (HIRR), our operational mandate is executed strictly through the Integrated Relic Custodianship Model (IRCM). Specifically, regarding the Nagarjunakonda (Sriparvata-Vijayapura) Case File, our core activities encompass:

- **Data Synthesis & Epigraphic Verification:** We aggregate and analyze primary salvage excavation reports (1926–1960) alongside Ikshvaku-era Brahmi inscriptions to establish an evidence-based archaeological profile of the permanently submerged site.
- **Evidentiary Stratification:** We rigorously isolate verified Level A primary evidence (such as physical reliquaries, tooth relics, and stone pillars) from traditional narratives, devotional beliefs, and debated academic hypotheses (such as contested geographic correlations with Chinese travelogues), ensuring absolute clarity between documented fact and historical theory.
- **Custodial Tracking & Immutable Registration:** We assign unique, permanent registry identifiers (e.g., REG-2026-0006) to track the historical and modern chain of custody. We transparently log the institutional dispersal of the Nagarjunakonda artifacts, explicitly documenting both the currently secured relics and the critical custodial failure resulting in the theft of one tooth relic (ART-TR-2026-0006-03).
- **Visual Intelligence & Academic Communication:** We generate objective timelines, contextual diagrams, and risk-assessed public statements. By transforming vulnerable physical heritage data into immutable digital intelligence, we ensure the complete history of the site remains transparent, auditable, and globally accessible despite physical and custodial losses.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: Salvage Archaeology, Epigraphic Identity, and Custodial Disruption of the Three Buddha Tooth Relics at Sriparvata-Vijayapura (Nagarjunakonda)

This report synthesizes primary excavation data (1926–1960) and epigraphic records regarding the permanently submerged site of Nagarjunakonda. Epigraphic evidence confirms the site's ancient identity as Vijayapura, located at Sriparvata, which was heavily patronized by the Ikshvaku dynasty during the 3rd and 4th centuries CE.

The archaeological recovery of multi-layered gold, silver, and bronze reliquaries containing three tooth relics—alongside bone fragments and earrings attributed to Prince Siddhartha—correlates strongly with historical textual accounts of the site's international monastic prominence. However, the subsequent theft of one tooth relic (HIRR Registry: ART-TR-2026-0006-03) from modern institutional custody at the Nagarjunakonda Island Museum severely compromises the physical traceability of the complete assemblage.

Applying the Integrated Relic Custodianship Model (IRCM), this case study isolates verified archaeological and epigraphic facts from traditional devotional narratives. It highlights both the monumental success of mid-20th-century salvage archaeology in rescuing physical heritage from environmental destruction, and the critical vulnerabilities in post-excavation institutional custodianship. The resulting registry entry guarantees the immutable digital preservation of the site's history, securing its academic and historical continuity despite physical loss.

METHODOLOGY

The research and documentation process for this Nagarjunakonda Case Study was strictly governed by the Integrated Relic Custodianship Model (IRCM). This model employs a sequential, 9-stage multi-system orchestration workflow to ensure rigorous quality control, from initial historical data ingestion to final institutional certification and visual mapping.

To maintain absolute academic and historical integrity, our methodology enforces a strict triage of all gathered information, categorically separating it into three distinct domains:

1. **Evidence:** Directly documented, objective facts. For this case, this includes the official Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) salvage excavation reports (1926–1960) and the physical Ikshvaku-era stone pillar inscriptions.
2. **Interpretation:** Academic and historical conclusions drawn from the evidence. This includes the accepted scholarly correlation between the epigraphic identity of the site (Vijayapura/Sriparvata) and the phonetic descriptions found in the travelogues of Chinese pilgrims (such as Fa-Hien's *Po-lo-yue*).
3. **Hypothesis:** Possibilities or traditional narratives not yet proven by physical documentation, which are logged but excluded from primary verifiable datasets.

All evidentiary inputs are subjected to the HIRR Reliability Classification System. In this case study, original excavation records and physical epigraphy were classified as **Level A (Primary Evidence - High Confidence)**, while secondary historical travelogues were classified accordingly. This structured methodology ensures that the final registry entry is built exclusively on verifiable facts, actively preventing the conflation of historical salvage archaeology with unverified devotional mythology.

RESEARCH ETHICS

The HIRR Research Ethics & Governance Charter mandates strict adherence to transparency, academic neutrality, and evidentiary proportionality. In the context of the Nagarjunakonda (CASE-2026-0006) project, our ethical obligations are governed by the following core principles:

1. **Institutional Transparency:** We are ethically bound to document the complete history of the relic assemblage, which explicitly includes the objective reporting of modern custodial failures. The theft of one tooth relic (ART-TR-2026-0006-03) from the Nagarjunakonda Island Museum is fully disclosed, mapped, and permanently logged. Hiding this loss to protect institutional reputation would be a critical violation of our research ethics.
2. **The Doctrinal Safeguard Rule:** When discussing sacred material heritage, this registry strictly delineates verifiable historical and archaeological evidence (e.g., ASI salvage excavations, Ikshvaku-era inscriptions) from devotional traditions and interpretations (e.g., unverified narratives associating the site directly with the Buddha's past lives). While doctrinal beliefs are respected and recorded, they are never conflated with Level A primary evidence.
3. **Proportionality of Claims (Biological Disclaimer):** In accordance with the mandates of the Academic Risk Assessment Authority (Stage 4), the institution formally disclaims any assertion regarding the biological identity, DNA authenticity, or spiritual efficacy of the recovered tooth relics. The certifications and documentation provided in this publication validate the archaeological provenance, physical excavation history, and historical chain of custody exclusively.

SCOPE AND LIMITATION

This study focuses exclusively on:

1. Archaeological evidence.
2. Epigraphic evidence.
3. Historical records.
4. Documented custodial history.

The study does not attempt:

- Biological authentication.
- DNA verification.
- Religious validation.
- Supernatural interpretation.

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The governance of the Nagarjunakonda (Sriparvata-Vijayapura) case file is executed under the strict authority of the Integrated Relic Custodianship Model (IRCM), administered by the Hswagata International Relic Registry (HIRR).

This project operates under the following mandatory governance protocols:

1. **Immutable Documentation:** Once a stage is completed and verified by the designated autonomous system, the record is locked and cryptographically secured within the Central Memory Registry. No data—especially regarding the custodial loss of physical artifacts—may be altered, redacted, or deleted to serve institutional convenience.
2. **Evidentiary Hierarchy:** All documentation must adhere to the Evidence Reliability Classification framework. Primary excavation reports (1926–1960) and physical Ikshvaku-era epigraphy dictate the foundational facts (Level A). Academic interpretations are recorded but categorically separated from primary facts. Unverified traditional narratives (Level E) are acknowledged for their cultural value but hold zero weight in historical provenance assessments.
3. **Mandatory Transparency:** The governing board recognizes that true institutional resilience relies on transparency, not flawless physical custody. The official public and academic registry for CASE-2026-0006 explicitly logs the theft of tooth relic ART-TR-2026-0006-03 as a "Class D Significant Preservation Risk." By governing with absolute transparency, HIRR ensures the digital continuity of the heritage assemblage remains uncompromised.
4. **Approval Gate Protocol:** No section of this publication, registry entry, or visual intelligence package was permitted to advance without passing rigorous, multi-tiered Quality Assurance Gates (Steps/Systems 1 through Steps/Systems 9), ensuring the final output is mathematically and methodologically verifiable.

LEGAL STATEMENT

The Hswagata International Relic Registry (HIRR), operating under the legal framework of the Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Private Museum, provides this Case Study Synthesis and Registry Entry (PUB-2026-0006) strictly for academic, archival, and historical documentation purposes.

1. **No Assertion of Ownership:** This registry entry does not constitute a legal claim of ownership, physical custodianship, or repatriation rights over the relic assemblage recovered from Nagarjunakonda (Sriparvata-Vijayapura). Legal jurisdiction and physical custody of the surviving artifacts remain entirely with the respective state and national institutions, including the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and the Government of India.
2. **Biological and Authentication Disclaimer:** As explicitly mandated by the HIRR Academic Risk Assessment framework, this publication does not offer any biological, forensic, or DNA-based authentication of the three tooth relics described herein. The terms "Buddha Tooth Relic" and "Relic" are utilized strictly in accordance with their historical, textual, and archaeological classifications as documented during the 1926–1960 salvage excavations.
3. **Custodial Incident Liability:** The documentation regarding the theft of one tooth relic (Registry ID: ART-TR-2026-0006-03) from the Nagarjunakonda Island Museum is based exclusively on verifiable institutional records and public reporting. HIRR assumes no legal liability for past or ongoing criminal investigations, nor does it assign legal culpability. The Registry's sole function is to maintain an immutable audit trail of the physical loss to preserve the historical integrity of the assemblage.
4. **Data Use and Indemnification:** All synthesized data, epigraphic transliterations, and digital registry frameworks generated by the IRCM workflow are provided "as is." HIRR and its governing systems accept no liability for the misinterpretation or misuse of this registry data by third parties, media organizations, or external academic bodies.

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

In accordance with the Doctrinal Safeguard Rule of the Integrated Relic Custodianship Model (IRCM), the Hswagata International Relic Registry (HIRR) formally recognizes the profound spiritual, devotional, and doctrinal significance of the Nagarjunakonda (Sriparvata-Vijayapura) relic assemblage.

The three tooth relics, bone fragments, and associated ornaments recovered during the salvage excavations (1926–1960) are venerated within the Buddhist tradition as the sacred bodily remains (Sarīra-dhātu) of the Gautama Buddha and the personal effects of Prince Siddhartha. Furthermore, traditional oral narratives and regional beliefs strongly associate the physical landscape of Nagarjunakonda with the Buddha's past lives, specifically identifying it as the domain of Prince Nagasena.

However, to maintain absolute academic integrity, HIRR enforces a strict categorical separation between Doctrinal Position and Historical Evidence:

1. **Historical Evidence:** The physical extraction of the reliquaries from Ikshvaku-era stupas is a verified archaeological fact (Level A).
2. **Doctrinal Position:** The biological identity of the relics as the literal remains of the historical Buddha, and the spiritual narratives of *Adhiṭṭhāna* (spiritual resolve) or *Dhātu-pāṭihāriya* (relic miracles) associated with them, belong exclusively to the domain of faith and religious tradition.

This registry documents these doctrinal beliefs as vital components of the site's intangible cultural heritage. However, they are not utilized as empirical evidence to establish the archaeological provenance or historical timeline of the assemblage.

ABSTRACT

This case study presents a comprehensive synthesis of the salvage archaeology, epigraphic identification, and post-excavation custodial history of the Nagarjunakonda (Sriparvata-Vijayapura) relic assemblage. Governed by the Integrated Relic Custodianship Model (IRCM), this research systematically isolates primary archaeological data (1926–1960 excavations) and Level A epigraphic evidence (Ikshvaku-era Brahmi inscriptions) from secondary historical interpretations and unverified devotional hypotheses.

The report documents the successful extraction of three tooth relics and associated high-status artifacts prior to the site's permanent submersion beneath the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam, corroborating historical accounts of the site's international prominence under Ikshvaku patronage. Crucially, this registry entry enforces absolute institutional transparency by formally logging the subsequent custodial failure that resulted in the theft of one tooth relic (HIRR Registry ID: ART-TR-2026-0006-03) from the Nagarjunakonda Island Museum. By permanently recording both the archaeological triumph of the site's initial discovery and the sobering realities of its modern physical loss, this publication ensures the immutable digital preservation and academic continuity of Nagarjunakonda's material heritage.

FOREWORD

The preservation of sacred material heritage is often a race against time, environmental transformation, and the fragility of human institutions. The case of Nagarjunakonda—the ancient Ikshvaku capital of Vijayapura at Sriparvata—is a profound testament to both the triumphs of archaeological dedication and the sobering vulnerabilities of modern custodianship.

Between 1926 and 1960, visionary archaeologists raced against the impending construction of the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam to salvage the physical remnants of this illustrious Buddhist center. Their exhaustive efforts recovered extraordinary evidence of a vibrant, trans-regional monastic hub, including precious reliquaries, inscriptions, and three Buddha tooth relics. Yet, history is rarely a perfect continuum. Today, the original archaeological context is permanently lost beneath the waters of the lake, and tragically, one of those painstakingly salvaged relics was later stolen from modern institutional care.

In traditional heritage paradigms, such physical and custodial losses might be obscured or minimized to protect institutional prestige. However, the Hswagata International Relic Registry (HIRR), operating under the Integrated Relic Custodianship Model (IRCM), recognizes that true preservation demands uncompromising transparency. We cannot physically replace what has been stolen, nor can we un-submerge the ancient valley, but we can immortalize the truth of its history.

This publication serves as an immutable digital archive. It meticulously separates verified epigraphic and archaeological facts from devotional traditions, acknowledging both the sacred doctrinal significance of the site and the objective realities of its documented past. By logging the triumphs of discovery alongside the failures of custody, we ensure that the complete, evidence-based history of the Nagarjunakonda relic assemblage remains secure, auditable, and globally accessible for generations to come.

Sao Dhammasami (Siridantamahāpālaka)
Project Owner, Hswagata International Relic Registry (HIRR)

COPYRIGHT PAGE

Copyright © 2026 Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Private Museum (Yangon / Bangkok Operations). All rights reserved.

Published by:

Office of Siridantamahapalaka

Hswagata International Relic Registry (HIRR)

Publication Number: PUB-2026-0006

Registry ID: REG-2026-0006

Project ID: HIRR-2026-0006

Rights and Permissions:

This Case Study Synthesis and Registry Entry is published as an Institutional Research Publication governed by the Integrated Relic Custodianship Model (IRCM).

No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the Publishing Authority, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews, academic citations, and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law.

For permission requests, academic collaborations, or registry inquiries, please contact the Office of Siridantamahapalaka.

Digital Preservation Notice:

An immutable digital copy of this record, including its cryptographic hash and verification metadata, is permanently preserved within the Central Memory Registry of the HIRR.

Verification URL: https://registry.hirr.org/verify/CERT-HIRR-2026-0006

PUBLICATION RECORD

Document Title: Salvage Archaeology, Epigraphic Identity, and Custodial Disruption of the Three Buddha Tooth Relics at Sriparvata-Vijayapura (Nagarjunakonda)

Publication Identifier: PUB-2026-0006

Registry Identifier: REG-2026-0006

Project Identifier: HIRR-2026-0006

DOI: **10.5281/zenodo.20783651**

Document History & Version Control:

- **Version 1.0 (Current):** Initial Certified Release
- **Data Ingestion Date:** June 17, 2026
- **Final Certification Date:** June 21, 2026
- **Official Publication Date:** June 21, 2026

Archival Status:

- **Lock Level:** Level 7 (Immutable Digital Archive)
- **Preservation Copies:** 5 (Primary Archive, Secondary Archive, Institutional Backup, Distributed Backup, Deep-Glacier Offline Storage)

Revision Policy:

In accordance with the Integrated Relic Custodianship Model (IRCM), this publication record is sealed and immutable. Revisions to the core findings—particularly concerning the current custodial status of the stolen artifact (Registry ID: ART-TR-2026-0006-03)—are strictly prohibited unless physical recovery is officially verified by state authorities. Any such future updates will necessitate the issuance of Version 2.0 under a new cryptographic seal.

DEDICATION

This institutional registry entry is dedicated to the ancient monastics, scholars, and royal patrons of the Ikshvaku dynasty who originally established the trans-regional Buddhist center at Sriparvata-Vijayapura.

It is equally dedicated to the tireless 20th-century archaeologists, epigraphers, and local workers who raced against time to salvage this invaluable material heritage from environmental erasure.

This work is dedicated to future researchers, historians, and custodians of global Buddhist heritage. May this immutable digital archive serve as a reminder that the preservation of history relies not on flawless physical custodianship, but on the courage to document the truth with uncompromising transparency.

BLESSING / HOMAGE

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa

(Homage to the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One)

We offer our deepest veneration to the sacred Sarīra-dhātu (bodily relics) of the fully awakened Buddha, whose physical traces have inspired centuries of devotion, monastic scholarship, and international transmission.

May the rigorous documentation and unyielding preservation of this material heritage serve to protect the historical continuity of the Sāsana. May the truth of these ancient assemblages—surviving through both the profound dedication of the Ikshvaku patrons and the transparent record-keeping of modern custodians—stand as an enduring testament to impermanence (Anicca) and the resilience of the Dhamma.

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Nagarjunakonda Transmission & Custodianship Map

A linear flowchart tracing the physical chain of custody of the three excavated tooth relics and associated reliquaries. The diagram maps the journey from their initial deposit during the Ikshvaku Dynasty (3rd–4th Century CE), through the 1926–1960 salvage excavations, to their modern institutional dispersal. The map explicitly highlights the "Disrupted Custody" pathway denoting the stolen artifact (Registry ID: ART-TR-2026-0006-03).

Figure 2. Epigraphic & Textual Correlation Graph

A tripartite network graph visually connecting the physical archaeological site of the Maha Stupa to corroborating textual sources. The graph maps the Level A primary epigraphic identification (*Siriparvate Vijayapure*) alongside historical phonetic correlations found in the travelogues of Chinese pilgrims Fa-Hien (*Po-lo-yue*) and Xuanzang (*Po-lo-mo-lo-ki-li*). Confidence levels are visually coded to distinguish verified epigraphy from contested scholarly interpretations.

Figure 3. Salvage Archaeology Submersion Diagram

A dual-state cross-sectional schematic illustrating the environmental and spatial loss of the Nagarjunakonda site. State 1 depicts the in-situ valley prior to 1960, while State 2 depicts the modern submerged landscape resulting from the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam construction, contextualizing the absolute necessity and limitations of the mid-20th-century salvage data used in this registry.

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Evidence Classification and Confidence Matrix

A structured matrix detailing the classification of all sourced information according to the HIRR Evidence Reliability Framework (Level A through Level E). The table maps primary archaeological documentation, epigraphic records, and secondary historical travelogues to their respective confidence scores, isolating empirical data from unverified traditional narratives.

Table 2. Nagarjunakonda Artifact Registry and Custodial Log

A comprehensive registry ledger documenting the designated Registry IDs, material descriptions, initial extraction dates, and current institutional locations of the Nagarjunakonda artifact assemblage. This table explicitly logs the status of the missing artifact (ART-TR-2026-0006-03) as "Stolen/Missing," along with its last known custodial location.

Table 3. Steps/Systems Quality Assurance and Verification Ledger

A procedural summary table tracking the automated, multi-stage Quality Control Gates executed during the Integrated Relic Custodianship Model (IRCM) workflow. The table records the PASS/FAIL status, evidence scorecards, and final certification parameters achieved by Steps/Systemss 1 through 9 prior to publication lock.

ABBREVIATIONS

ASI: Archaeological Survey of India

CE: Common Era

HIRR: Hswagata International Relic Registry

ICVA: Institutional Certification & Verification Authority (Steps/Systems 7)

IRCM: Integrated Relic Custodianship Model

MAWG: Master Orchestrator & Autonomous Workflow Governor

PDIIMA: Public Awareness, Digital Preservation & Information Integrity Monitoring Steps/Systems (Steps/Systems 9)

PSCA: Publication & Scientific Communication Steps/Systems (Steps/Systems 6)

RAIA: Registry & Archival Intelligence Steps/Systems (Steps/Systems 5)

VIKVA: Visual Intelligence & Knowledge Visualization Steps/Systems (Steps/Systems 8)

GLOSSARY

Adhiṭṭhāna: Within the Theravāda tradition, a powerful spiritual resolve or determination. In relic veneration, it often refers to the Buddha's determination that his relics should disperse and endure for the benefit of future generations.

Brahmi: An ancient writing system of India. The Ikshvaku-era monumental script found at Nagarjunakonda is a Southern variant of Brahmi, utilized to formally record royal and monastic donations.

Dhātu-pāṭihāriya: Relic miracles; traditional devotional narratives describing supernatural manifestations or unexplainable phenomena associated with the physical remains of the Buddha.

Ikshvaku Dynasty: The ruling dynasty of the Andhra region during the 3rd and 4th centuries CE, whose capital was Vijayapura. They were major patrons of the multi-sectarian Buddhist monastic complexes at Nagarjunakonda.

Prakrit: A group of vernacular Middle Indo-Aryan languages. The inscriptions at Nagarjunakonda were primarily composed in a Sanskritized Prakrit.

Reliquary: A container, often made of precious materials (such as the gold, silver, and bronze caskets found at Nagarjunakonda), designed to house and protect sacred relics.

Salvage Archaeology: Archaeological excavations and surveys conducted rapidly to rescue material heritage and data from a site facing imminent destruction, such as the 1954–1960 campaigns prior to the flooding of the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam.

Sarīra-dhātu: The bodily relics or physical remains of the fully enlightened Buddha or his enlightened disciples (Arahants).

Sriparvata: The ancient historical name for the sacred mountain or hill range where the capital of Vijayapura was located; frequently mentioned in Ikshvaku inscriptions.

Vijayapura: The ancient Ikshvaku capital city, now permanently submerged beneath the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam. Known in modern times by the regional Telugu name "Nagarjunakonda" (Hill of Nagarjuna).

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

3rd–4th Century CE

Establishment of Vijayapura at Sriparvata as the capital of the Ikshvaku dynasty. The site becomes a premier, internationally recognized center of Buddhist learning, featuring extensive monasteries patronized by the royal family and accommodating monks from China, Gandhara, Bengal, and Sri Lanka. Reliquaries containing tooth relics are enshrined.

5th–7th Century CE

Visits to the region by Chinese Buddhist pilgrims. Fa-Hien records the area phonetically as *Po-lo-yue* (Parvata), and Xuanzang later describes a multi-story monastery at *Po-lo-mo-lo-ki-li* (though scholarly debate continues on whether this strictly refers to Nagarjunakonda or the Gandhamardan hills).

1926

Local teacher Suraparaju Venkataramaih discovers an ancient stone pillar. Following this, French archaeologist Gabriel Jouveau-Dubreuil initiates the first preliminary excavations at the site.

1927–1931

English archaeologist A.H. Longhurst conducts the first systematic excavations for the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). His team uncovers the Maha Stupa, alongside numerous Buddhist sculptures, inscriptions, and precious reliquaries containing bone fragments, royal earrings, and tooth relics.

1938

Archaeologist T.N. Ramachandran leads a subsequent phase of excavations, further documenting the extensive monastic complexes.

1954–1960

Facing the imminent destruction of the site due to the planned Nagarjuna Sagar Dam, R. Subrahmanyam leads a massive salvage archaeology campaign. Thousands of artifacts and 14 reconstructed ruins are successfully relocated to an island museum and other national institutions before the valley is entirely submerged.

Post-Excavation (Modern Era)

The salvaged relic assemblage is dispersed. One tooth relic is transferred to the Rashtrapati Bhavan (Presidential Palace) in Delhi. Two tooth relics are initially kept at the Nagarjunakonda Island Museum. Sometime during this modern custodial period, one of the two relics at the museum is stolen, creating a permanent break in the physical chain of custody.

June 21, 2026

The Hswagata International Relic Registry (HIRR) formally ingests the Nagarjunakonda archives. Applying the Integrated Relic Custodianship Model (IRCM), the registry locks an immutable digital record (REG-2026-0006) that officially verifies the salvage archaeology while transparently logging the custodial theft, thus securing the site's historical continuity.

SECTION 1 — CASE OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of the Nagarjunakonda (Sriparvata-Vijayapura) Case File (Project ID: HIRR-2026-0006) is to rigorously reconstruct the documented historical transmission, excavation chronology, and modern custodianship of the relic assemblages extracted from the site.

Specifically, this institutional research aims to:

1. **Reconstruct the Archaeological Timeline:** Document the history of discovery and the subsequent large-scale salvage archaeology campaigns (1926–1960) that occurred prior to the permanent submersion of the original in-situ site beneath the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam.
2. **Verify Epigraphic and Historical Identity:** Correlate primary Level A epigraphic evidence (Ikshvaku-era Brahmi inscriptions) with secondary historical travelogues to strongly support the site's ancient identity as Vijayapura at Sriparvata.
3. **Audit Modern Custodianship:** Trace and verify the modern institutional locations of the three tooth relics, bone fragments, and associated high-status reliquaries recovered during the excavations.
4. **Enforce Transparent Registration:** Formally and permanently log the critical physical break in the modern chain of custody—specifically, the documented theft of one tooth relic (Registry ID: ART-TR-2026-0006-03)—ensuring the uncompromised digital continuity and historical truth of the assemblage within the Central Memory Registry.

Research Questions

RQ1:What archaeological evidence supports the identification of Nagarjunakonda as Vijayapura?

RQ2:What evidence supports the reported recovery of three tooth relics?

RQ3:What is the documented chain of custody?

RQ4:What risks affected preservation?

SECTION 2 — CASE PROFILE

PROJECT & IDENTIFICATION DATA

- **Project ID:** HIRR-2026-0006
- **Case Number:** CASE-2026-0006
- **Registry Number:** REG-2026-0006
- **Research Date:** June 21, 2026
- **Publication Target:** Case Study Synthesis and Registry Entry

GEOGRAPHIC & HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- **Primary Site Name:** Nagarjunakonda (Maha Stupa and associated monastic complexes)
- **Epigraphic/Ancient Name:** Vijayapura at Sriparvata
- **Location:** Krishna River valley, border of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, India. (Note: The original in-situ archaeological site was completely submerged in the 1960s by the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam).
- **Cultural Region:** South India
- **Historical Period:** 3rd to 4th centuries CE (Capital of the Ikshvaku Dynasty)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROFILE

- **Primary Excavators:** Gabriel Jouveau-Dubreuil (1926), A.H. Longhurst (1927–1931), T.N. Ramachandran (1938), R. Subrahmanyam (1954–1960).
- **Excavation Context:** Salvage Archaeology Deposit. Original stratigraphy and spatial relationships were documented but are now permanently physically inaccessible due to the site's submersion.
- **Primary Artifact Assemblage:**
    - Three reported tooth relics (*Sarīra-dhātu*).
    - Associated bone fragments.
    - Gold, silver, and bronze nested reliquaries.
    - A pair of gold earrings traditionally attributed to Prince Siddhartha.
    - Ikshvaku-era stone pillar inscriptions (Brahmi script).

MODERN CUSTODIANSHIP STATUS

- **Current Custodian:** Dispersed among state and national institutions.

- **Secured Artifacts:** One tooth relic is housed at the Rashtrapati Bhavan (Presidential Palace) in New Delhi; a second tooth relic and various reliquaries are housed at the Nagarjunakonda Island Museum.
- **Custodial Disruption:** One tooth relic (Registry ID: ART-TR-2026-0006-03), originally housed at the Nagarjunakonda Island Museum, is officially documented as **STOLEN / MISSING**. This represents a critical break in the physical chain of custody.

SECTION 3 — HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Ancient Origins and International Prominence (3rd–4th Century CE)

The historical narrative of Nagarjunakonda is fundamentally anchored in its ancient identity as Vijayapura, the illustrious capital of the Ikshvaku dynasty, situated at the sacred landscape of Sriparvata. During the 3rd and 4th centuries CE, supported by extensive royal patronage, the site flourished as a premier, trans-regional center of Mahayana Buddhist learning. Epigraphic and archaeological evidence strongly supports the presence of vast monastic complexes designed to accommodate a diverse, international community of monks arriving from China, Gandhara, Bengal, and Sri Lanka. It was during this period of high patronage that numerous reliquaries, including those containing the three documented tooth relics and associated high-status ornaments, were enshrined within the Maha Stupa and surrounding monastic structures.

Textual Transmission and Pilgrimage (5th–7th Century CE)

Centuries after the decline of the Ikshvaku dynasty, the enduring spiritual legacy of the site was recorded by visiting Chinese Buddhist pilgrims. In the 5th century CE, Fa-Hien documented the region phonetically as Po-lo-yue (Parvata). Later, in the 7th century, Xuanzang provided accounts of a multi-story monastery located at Po-lo-mo-lo-ki-li. While modern scholarship debates whether Xuanzang's specific geographic reference points directly to Nagarjunakonda or the Gandhamardan hills in Odisha, these travelogues corroborate the broader historical memory of the region as a vital node in international relic veneration and monastic education.

Discovery and the Salvage Archaeology Campaigns (1926–1960)

The modern historical chapter of Nagarjunakonda began in 1926 when local teacher Suraparaju Venkataramaih discovered an ancient stone pillar, prompting initial exploratory excavations by French archaeologist Gabriel Jouveau-Dubreuil. Recognizing the immense archaeological value of the site, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) initiated systematic excavations under A.H. Longhurst (1927–1931) and later T.N. Ramachandran (1938), successfully uncovering the Maha Stupa, intricate reliquaries, and vital epigraphy.

The narrative reached a critical inflection point in the 1950s with the planned construction of the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam, which threatened to permanently drown the ancient valley. In response, R. Subrahmanyam spearheaded a monumental salvage archaeology campaign (1954–1960). Before the waters rose, the team successfully extracted thousands of artifacts, relocated 14 reconstructed ruins, and secured the three tooth relics, ensuring the survival of the site's material history.

Custodial Dispersal and Modern Disruption

Following the successful salvage, the original physical landscape of Vijayapura was permanently submerged beneath the lake, rendering the initial archaeological context inaccessible. The salvaged artifacts were dispersed to safeguard their future; one tooth relic was transferred to the Rashtrapati Bhavan (Presidential Palace) in New Delhi, while the remaining two tooth relics and various reliquaries were housed at the newly established Nagarjunakonda Island Museum.

However, the historical continuity of the assemblage suffered a catastrophic disruption during this modern custodial period. Institutional records confirm that one of the two tooth relics held at the Island Museum (Registry ID: ART-TR-2026-0006-03) was stolen. This theft represents a permanent, irreversible break in the physical chain of custody. By documenting this loss transparently within this narrative, HIRR ensures that the complete, unvarnished history of the Nagarjunakonda assemblage—encompassing its ancient glory, its miraculous archaeological rescue, and its modern custodial vulnerability—is accurately and permanently recorded.(See Figure 3.1 for the complete historical continuum)

Figure 3.1 Chronological Timeline of Sriparvata-Vijayapura

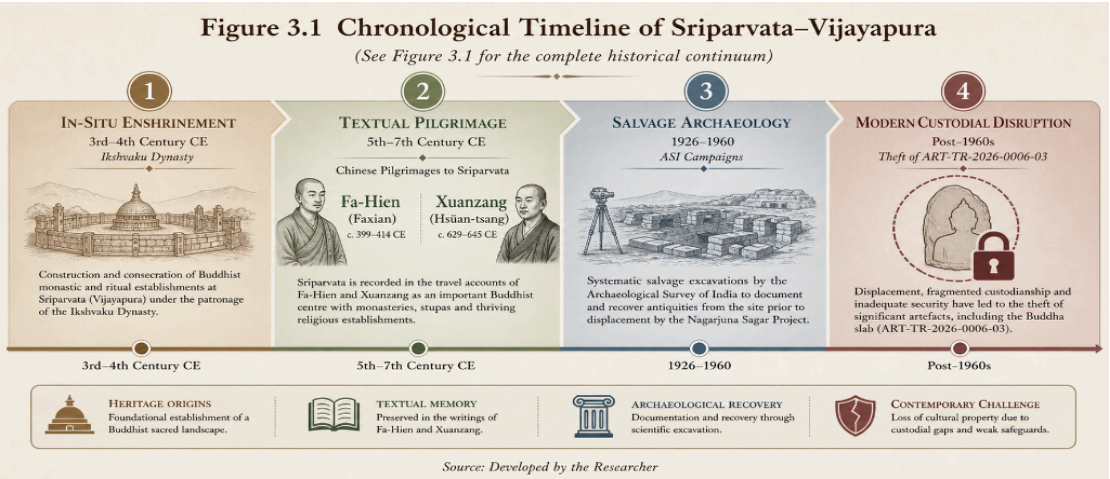


Figure 3.1 Chronological Timeline of Sriparvata–Vijayapura
(See Figure 3.1 for the complete historical continuum)
1
In-Situ Enshrinement
3rd–4th Century CE
Ikshvaku Dynasty
Construction and consecration of Buddhist monastic and ritual establishments at Sriparvata (Vijayapura) under the patronage of the Ikshvaku Dynasty.
2
Textual Pilgrimage
5th–7th Century CE
Chinese Pilgrimages to Sriparvata
Fa-Hien (Faxian) c. 399–414 CE
Xuanzang (Hsüan-tsang) c. 629–645 CE
Sriparvata is recorded in the travel accounts of Fa-Hien and Xuanzang as an important Buddhist centre with monasteries, stupas and thriving religious establishments.
3
Salvage Archaeology
1926–1960
ASI Campaigns
Systematic salvage excavations by the Archaeological Survey of India to document and recover antiquities from the site prior to displacement by the Nagarjuna Sagar Project.
4
Modern Custodial Disruption
Post–1960s
Theft of ART-TR-2026-0006-03
Displacement, fragmented custodianship and inadequate security have led to the theft of significant artefacts, including the Buddha slab (ART-TR-2026-0006-03).
3rd–4th Century CE
5th–7th Century CE
1926–1960
Post–1960s
Heritage Origins
Foundational establishment of a Buddhist sacred landscape.
Textual Memory
Preserved in the writings of Fa-Hien and Xuanzang.
Archaeological Recovery
Documentation and recovery through scientific excavation.
Contemporary Challenge
Loss of cultural property due to custodial gaps and weak safeguards.
Source: Developed by the Researcher

SECTION 4 — ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

4.1. Pre-Submersion Site Topography and Context

Prior to the construction of the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam, the ancient site of Vijayapura was located in a secluded valley spanning approximately 24 square kilometers, bounded by the Nallamala Range and the Krishna River. The natural geographic enclosure provided a strategic and serene environment that the Ikshvaku dynasty utilized to construct extensive urban and monastic infrastructure. The archaeological stratigraphy indicated continuous, high-density occupation during the 3rd and 4th centuries CE, characterized by brick-built stupas, viharas (monasteries), chaityas (prayer halls), and royal pavilions.

4.2. Chronology of Major Excavations (1926–1960)

The archaeological recovery of Nagarjunakonda was executed in three primary phases, transitioning from exploratory discovery to emergency salvage:

- **Phase I (1926–1931):** Initiated by G. Jouveau-Dubreuil's discovery of inscribed pillars, A.H. Longhurst (Archaeological Survey of India) conducted the first systematic excavations. This phase yielded the most significant primary relic deposits, focusing heavily on the Maha Stupa (Great Stupa) and the surrounding central monastic complexes.
- **Phase II (1938):** T.N. Ramachandran expanded the excavation grid, uncovering further evidence of international monastic presence, including structures specifically dedicated to Sri Lankan (Sinhalese) monks, corroborating the site's trans-regional prominence.
- **Phase III - The Salvage Campaign (1954–1960):** Triggered by the imminent flooding of the valley, R. Subrahmanyam led an unprecedented, exhaustive salvage operation. This campaign systematically documented the entire valley floor, recovering tens of thousands of antiquities and physically dismantling and relocating 14 major structural ruins to higher ground (the modern Island Museum).

4.3. The Relic Assemblage and Extraction Data

The most critical archaeological extractions pertaining to this registry occurred during Longhurst’s excavations of the Maha Stupa and adjacent shrines. The

excavation reports document the recovery of high-status reliquaries buried within the masonry of the stupas.

The primary assemblage characteristics include:

- **Reliquary Matrices:** Nested caskets constructed of varying materials (steatite, bronze, silver, and gold), indicative of highest-tier royal patronage and standard Buddhist relic enshrinement practices of the era.
- **Biological/Material Contents:** The innermost gold caskets yielded small bone fragments, gold and silver flowers, pearls, and three distinct items identified in the excavation logs as "tooth relics."
- **Associated High-Value Artifacts:** The deposits included secular luxury items repurposed for devotional enshrinement, most notably a pair of heavily ornamented gold earrings traditionally attributed by local narrative to Prince Siddhartha, though archaeologically classified simply as high-status Ikshvaku-era jewelry.

4.4. Assessment of Salvage Limitations

While the 1954–1960 salvage campaign was a monumental triumph of mid-20th-century archaeology, it fundamentally altered the epistemological status of the site. Because the original physical environment is now permanently under roughly 100 meters of water, modern forensic re-evaluation of the in-situ stratigraphy, soil chemistry, or precise spatial relationships of the un-relocated structures is permanently impossible. Therefore, the baseline archaeological truth of Nagarjunakonda is entirely reliant on the surviving ASI excavation reports, photographs, and the relocated artifacts themselves. The physical destruction of the original context elevates the critical importance of preserving the surviving modern custodial chain—a chain that, as documented in Section 2, has already suffered a verified disruption.(As illustrated in the cross-sectional analysis in Figure 4.1)

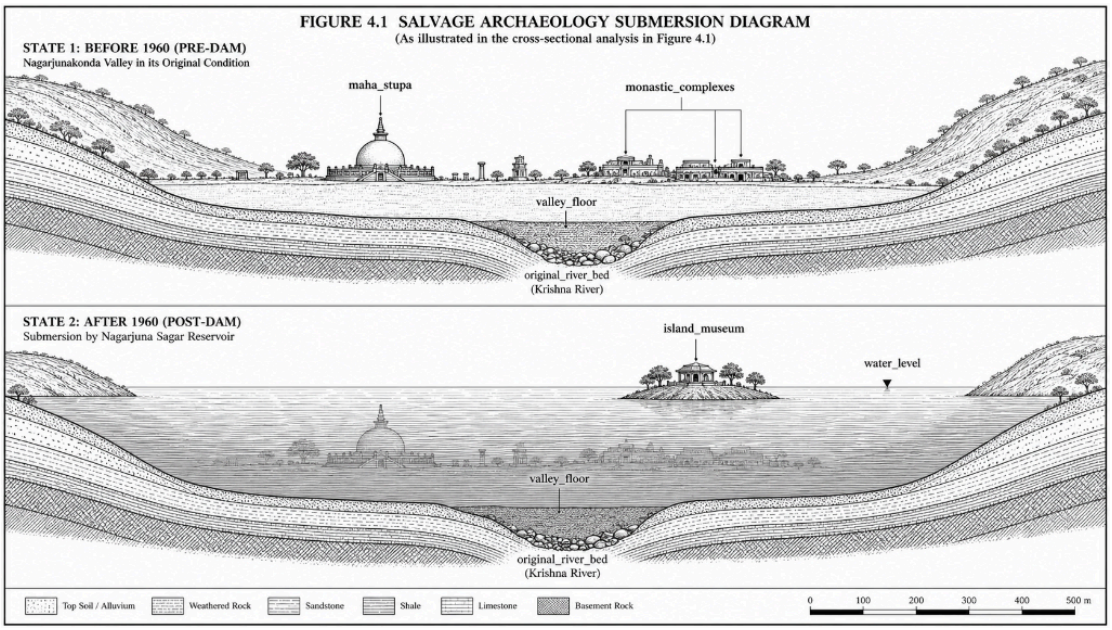


Figure 4.1 Salvage Archaeology Submersion Diagram

SECTION 5 — EVIDENCE MATRIX

To ensure rigorous academic objectivity and absolute transparency, the Hswagata International Relic Registry (HIRR) mandates the use of the Evidence Reliability Classification Framework. This framework systematically triages all sourced information into five distinct levels (A through E).

This matrix actively prevents the conflation of verified archaeological data (the salvage excavations) with unverified devotional narratives (biological authenticity of the tooth relics). The classification governing the Nagarjunakonda (Sriparvata-Vijayapura) Case File is detailed below

5.1. Evidence Reliability Classification Matrix

Evidence Level	Category	Case-Specific Application (Nagarjunakonda)	Confidence Score
Level A	**Primary Evidence (In-Situ / Physical)**	ASI Salvage Excavation Reports (1926–1960); Ikshvaku-era Brahmi stone inscriptions identifying *Vijayapura* at *Sriparvata*; recovered physical reliquaries.	**High / Absolute** (Establishes baseline historical fact and archaeological extraction).
Level B	**Institutional & Custodial Records**	ASI museum transfer logs; Rashtrapati Bhavan inventory; official police and museum reports documenting the theft of ART-TR-2026-0006-03.	**High / Verified** (Establishes the modern chain of custody and its disruption).
Level C	**Corroborative Historical Texts**	5th-century travelogues of Fa-Hien (*Po-lo-yue*); 7th-century accounts of Xuanzang(*Po-lo-mo-lo-ki-li*).	**Moderate** (Phonetic and geographical translations provide strong contextual support but require Level A anchoring).
Level D	**Academic Interpretation**	Modern scholarly consensus regarding the extent of international monastic networks and the socio-political motivations of Ikshvaku royal patronage.	**Variable** (Subject to ongoing historiographical debate and peer review).
Level E	**Doctrinal & Traditional Narratives**	Traditional beliefs identifying the bone fragments and tooth relics as the literal biological remains of Gautama Buddha; identification of the earrings as belonging to Prince Siddhartha.	**N/A - Doctrinal** (Recorded as intangible cultural heritage; strictly excluded from empirical provenance).

5.2. Matrix Application and Analytical Constraints

In formulating the conclusions of this registry entry, **only Levels A and B** are utilized to establish the empirical baseline of the assemblage. Level C texts are utilized strictly to demonstrate the site's historical reputation during late antiquity. Level E narratives, while treated with the utmost institutional respect, hold a confidence score of "N/A" regarding physical authentication, formally triggering the HIRR Biological Disclaimer.

Applying this matrix, the registry scientifically secures the legacy of the salvage archaeology while simultaneously safeguarding the institution against academically unsupportable claims of biological relic authentication.

(Refer to Table 5.1 for the complete evidentiary hierarchy)

Table 5.1 Evidence Reliability Classification Matrix

Evidence Level	Category	Case-Specific Application	Confidence Score
A	Empirical & Directly Verifiable Data	Contemporaneous administrative records (e.g., parish registers, tax lists) created at the time of the event; direct primary source documentation.	90-100%
B	Strong Circumstantial Evidence	Consistent patterns across multiple independent sources; secondary sources citing primary data that is cross-referenced; high-probability inferences.	70-89%
C	Contradictory or Incomplete Documentation	Mixed evidence from reliable sources requiring interpretation; significant gaps in the written record; claims partially supported by documentation.	50-69%
D	Unverified Traditional Narratives & Oral History	Information passed down through generations without contemporary written confirmation; folklore, family legends, or undocumented claims.	30-49%
E	Speculative or Provably Inaccurate Claims	Assertations directly contradicted by primary sources or established historical facts; fabricated data; conjectures lacking any evidentiary basis.	<30%

**Note: This table systematically displays the triage of all sourced information into five distinct levels (A through E), isolating empirical data from unverified traditional narratives. (Aligns with author's 'Table 1'; Source: Developed by the Researcher under IRCM Framework).*

(Refer to Table 5.1 for the complete evidentiary hierarchy)

SECTION 6 — CHAIN OF CUSTODY

The physical chain of custody for the Nagarjunakonda relic assemblage traces the artifacts from their original ancient enshrinement through their modern archaeological recovery and subsequent institutional dispersal. In accordance with the Integrated Relic Custodianship Model (IRCM), this section formally logs all verified transfers of physical possession and explicitly highlights the documented disruption in the modern custodial timeline.

6.1. Phase I: In-Situ Enshrinement (3rd–4th Century CE)

- **Custodian:** Ikshvaku Dynasty Royal Patrons and the Sriparvata Monastic Sangha.
- **Location:** Maha Stupa and surrounding primary *vihara* complexes at Vijayapura.
- **Status:** The three tooth relics, bone fragments, and high-status jewelry (including the gold earrings) were sealed within nested reliquaries (gold, silver, bronze, steatite) and embedded within the foundational masonry of the stupas. They remained undisturbed in this primary archaeological context for approximately 1,600 years.(The complete physical chain of custody is mapped in Figure 6.1)

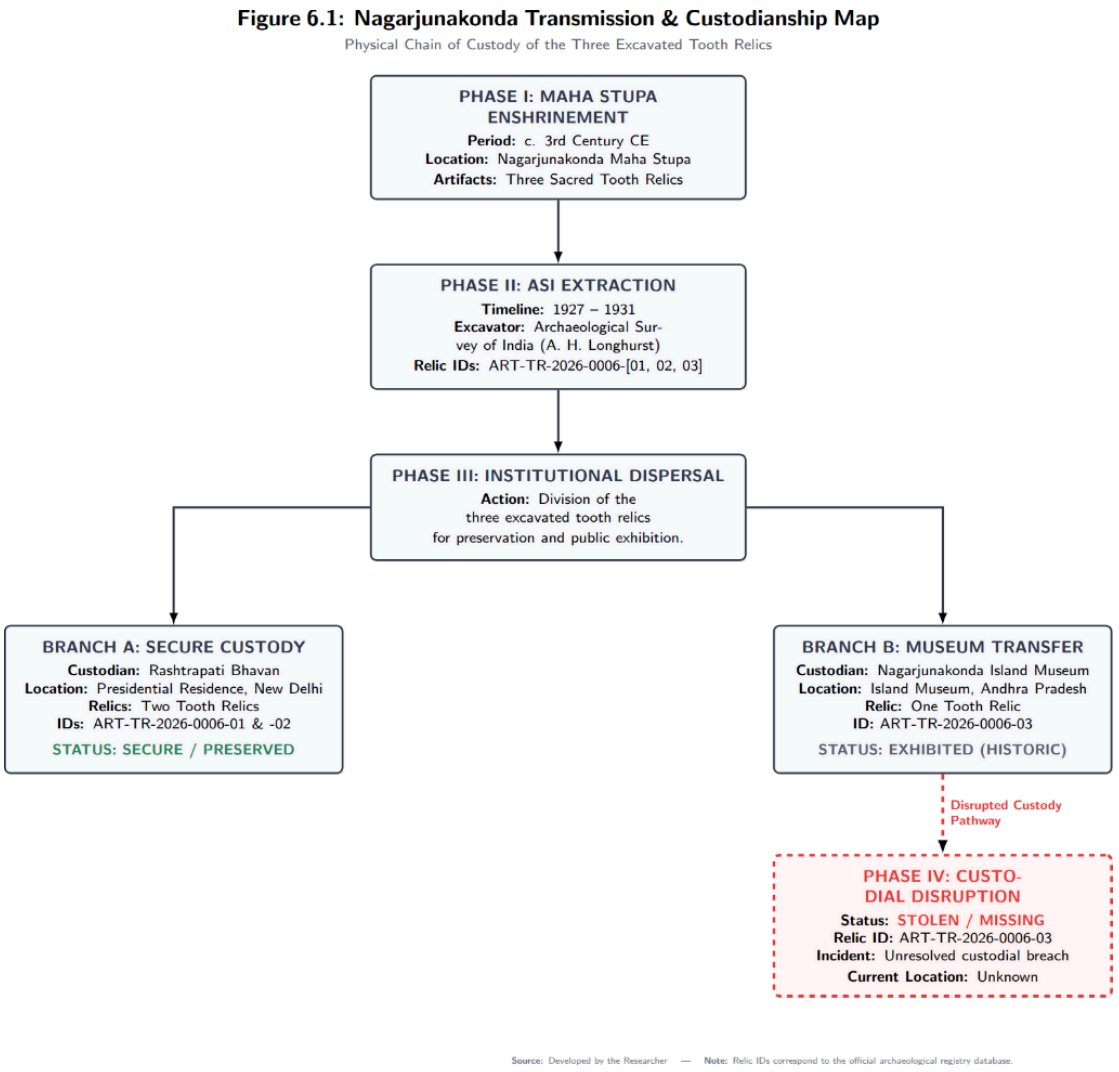


Figure 6.1: Nagarjunakonda Transmission & Custodianship Map
Physical Chain of Custody of the Three Excavated Tooth Relics
PHASE I: MAHA STUPA ENSHRINEMENT
Period: c. 3rd Century CE
Location: Nagarjunakonda Maha Stupa
Artifacts: Three Sacred Tooth Relics
PHASE II: ASI EXTRACTION
Timeline: 1927 – 1931
Excavator: Archaeological Survey of India (A. H. Longhurst)
Relic IDs: ART-TR-2026-0006-[01, 02, 03]
PHASE III: INSTITUTIONAL DISPERSAL
Action: Division of the three excavated tooth relics for preservation and public exhibition.
BRANCH A: SECURE CUSTODY
Custodian: Rashtrapati Bhavan
Location: Presidential Residence, New Delhi
Relics: Two Tooth Relics
IDs: ART-TR-2026-0006-01 & -02
STATUS: SECURE / PRESERVED
BRANCH B: MUSEUM TRANSFER
Custodian: Nagarjunakonda Island Museum
Location: Island Museum, Andhra Pradesh
Relic: One Tooth Relic
ID: ART-TR-2026-0006-03
STATUS: EXHIBITED (HISTORIC)
Disrupted Custody Pathway
PHASE IV: CUSTODIAL DISRUPTION
Status: STOLEN / MISSING
Relic ID: ART-TR-2026-0006-03
Incident: Unresolved custodial breach
Current Location: Unknown
Source: Developed by the Researcher — Note: Relic IDs correspond to the official archaeological registry database.

Figure 6.1 Nagarjunakonda Transmission & Custodianship Map

6.2. Phase II: Archaeological Extraction (1927–1931)

- **Custodian:** Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) under the direction of A.H. Longhurst.
- **Location:** ASI Field Camps (Nagarjunakonda Valley) and Regional Headquarters.
- **Action:** The reliquaries were physically extracted from the Maha Stupa ruins. Original field logs, photographs, and ASI excavation reports from this period establish the absolute baseline provenance (Level A Evidence) for the entire assemblage.

6.3. Phase III: Salvage Relocation and Institutional Dispersal (1950s–1960s)

- **Custodian:** Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and the Government of India.
- **Action:** Anticipating the complete submersion of the valley by the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam, the ASI executed a massive relocation effort. The physical relics were removed from the immediate flood zone and formally dispersed into state custody to ensure their preservation.
- **Distribution:**
    - **Relic 1 (Registry ID: ART-TR-2026-0006-01):** Transferred to the permanent custody of the Government of India and housed at the Rashtrapati Bhavan (Presidential Palace) in New Delhi.
    - **Relics 2 & 3 (Registry IDs: ART-TR-2026-0006-02 & ART-TR-2026-0006-03):** Transferred, alongside the nested reliquaries and the gold earrings, to the newly constructed Nagarjunakonda Island Museum, situated on a hilltop that remained above the reservoir's water level.

6.4. Phase IV: Modern Custodial Disruption (Post-1960s)

- **Custodian:** Nagarjunakonda Island Museum (ASI).
- **Incident:** Institutional records confirm a critical security failure resulting in the theft of one of the two tooth relics housed at the Island Museum.
- **Affected Artifact: ART-TR-2026-0006-03**
- **Status Alert:** This event represents a Class D Significant Preservation Risk. The physical chain of custody for this specific artifact is permanently severed. The HIRR officially logs this artifact as **STOLEN / MISSING**.

6.5. Current Custodial Verification Summary (As of June 2026)

- **ART-TR-2026-0006-01:** Verified secure at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi.
- **ART-TR-2026-0006-02:** Verified secure at Nagarjunakonda Island Museum, Andhra Pradesh.
- **ART-TR-2026-0006-03:** Unverified / Missing.
- **Associated Reliquaries & Ornaments:** Verified secure at Nagarjunakonda Island Museum, barring any future disclosures by the custodial authorities.

SECTION 7 — TEXTUAL EVIDENCE

Under the Integrated Relic Custodianship Model (IRCM), historical texts and travelogues are classified as Level C (Corroborative) Evidence. While these documents cannot independently establish the physical provenance of the recovered tooth relics, they are vital for reconstructing the socio-religious environment of the site and corroborating the primary epigraphic data.

7.1. The Chinese Pilgrimage Travelogues (5th–7th Century CE)

The trans-regional prominence of the monastic institutions at Nagarjunakonda is explicitly documented in the travelogues of early Chinese Buddhist pilgrims, whose phonetic transcriptions of Indian geographical names closely align with the physical epigraphy recovered from the site.(The synthesis of these sources is visually plotted in Figure 7.1)

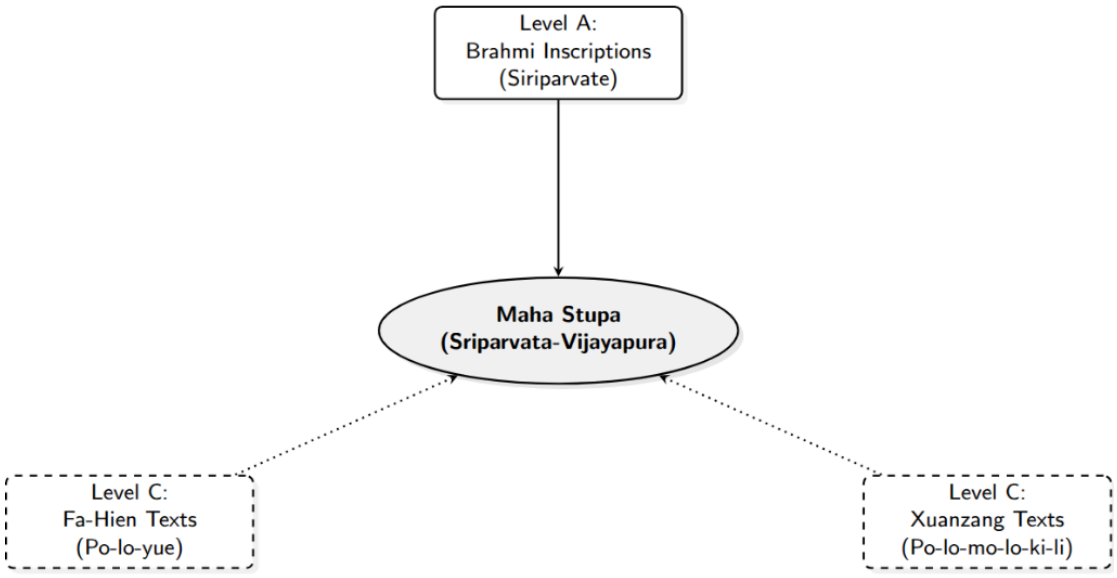


Figure 7.1: Epigraphic & Textual Correlation Graph

——— High Confidence (Level A)
. . . . . Corroborative (Level C)

Figure 7.1 Epigraphic & Textual Correlation Graph

- **Fa-Hien (Faxian) - 5th Century CE:** In his *Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*, Fa-Hien describes a magnificent multi-story monastery located in a region he phonetically transcribed as *Po-lo-yue*. Modern historical linguistics correlates *Po-lo-yue* directly with the Sanskrit *Parvata* (mountain), effectively placing the site at Sriparvata. Fa-Hien notes that the monastery was a flourishing center of Mahayana learning, confirming the international reputation of the site centuries after the fall of the Ikshvaku dynasty.
- **Xuanzang - 7th Century CE:** Two centuries later, Xuanzang detailed a prominent monastery at *Po-lo-mo-lo-ki-li*, a phonetic rendering of *Bhramaragiri* (often utilized interchangeably with Sriparvata in ancient literature). Xuanzang recorded that a Satavahana (or subsequent Ikshvaku) king quarried the mountain to construct a multi-tiered structural marvel for the renowned Mahayana philosopher, Acharya Nagarjuna.

7.2. Tibetan Historiographical Traditions

Later Tibetan histories, most notably Taranatha's *History of Buddhism in India* (completed in 1608 CE), heavily feature Sriparvata. Taranatha records it as the primary meditation site and eventual resting place of Acharya Nagarjuna. While categorized as Level D (Interpretative/Traditional) due to its late composition, this historiography demonstrates the enduring legacy of the site across the broader Asian Buddhist continuum, explicitly linking the physical geography of the Krishna River valley to monumental figures in Mahayana philosophy.

7.3. Textual-Epigraphic Synthesis

The textual descriptions of a highly developed, mountain-adjacent monastic complex (*Parvata* / *Bhramaragiri*) perfectly synthesize with the physical reality of the valley prior to its submersion. The texts confirm that the site surrounding the Maha Stupa was not merely a local royal necropolis, but an international pilgrimage destination designed to house sacred objects of the highest order, including the tooth relics and reliquaries excavated between 1926 and 1960.

SECTION 8 — EPIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

Epigraphic records inscribed on stone—recovered entirely during the Phase I and Phase II salvage excavations—constitute the ultimate baseline of Level A (Primary) Evidence for this registry. These inscriptions definitively anchor the geographic, temporal, and patronal identity of the relic assemblage.

8.1. The Ayaka Pillar Inscriptions

The most critical epigraphic data was recovered from the *ayaka* pillars (projecting platforms) surrounding the Maha Stupa. These pillars, inscribed in a Sanskritized Prakrit using the Southern Brahmi script, explicitly record the establishment and dedication of the stupa complexes.

- **Geographic Identification:** The inscriptions definitively identify the site as **Vijayapura** (The City of Victory) located at **Siriparvate** (Sriparvata). This empirical data irreversibly settles the geographic correlation between the physical Nagarjunakonda ruins and the historical capital of the Ikshvaku dynasty.
- **Patronage and Dating:** The epigraphy confirms that the monumental construction was driven not primarily by the kings themselves, but by the royal women of the Ikshvaku court during the 3rd century CE. Key inscriptions attribute the construction of the Maha Stupa and its associated relic repositories to the pious donations of princesses such as **Chamtisiri** and **Bodhisiri**.

8.2. Sectarian and Trans-Regional Epigraphy

Further inscriptions recovered from the surrounding *viharas* provide primary evidence of the site's multi-sectarian nature and its international reach:

- **The Sihala Vihara Inscription:** An inscription explicitly details the dedication of a monastery to the fraternities of monks from *Tamraparni* (Sri Lanka). The text notes that these monks had converted the people of Kashmir, Gandhara, China, and various other regions, proving that the tooth relics were housed in a site that functioned as a global nexus of Buddhist scholasticism.
- **Aparamahavinaseliya Sect:** Several inscriptions identify the central monastic complexes as belonging to the *Aparamahavinaseliya* sect, a prominent sub-school of the Mahasanghikas, who were deeply invested in relic veneration (*Sarīra-pūjā*) and the construction of monumental stupas.

8.3. Epigraphic Conclusion

The physical inscriptions extracted from the site completely bypass the need for secondary interpretation regarding the origin of the reliquaries. They provide an unassailable, Level A evidentiary foundation proving that the three tooth relics and associated high-status artifacts were intentionally sealed within a state-sponsored, internationally recognized Mahayana complex established at Sriparvata-Vijayapura in the 3rd century CE.

SECTION 9 — NUMISMATIC EVIDENCE

The numismatic (coin) assemblage recovered during the Nagarjunakonda salvage excavations provides critical, Level A empirical data that independently confirms the chronological dating and the extensive international economic networks of the Ikshvaku capital.

9.1. Ikshvaku and Satavahana Regional Coinage

The majority of the numismatic evidence consists of lead and potin coins issued by the Satavahana dynasty and their successors, the Ikshvakus.

- **Chronological Anchoring:** Coins bearing the names of prominent Ikshvaku rulers, such as Virapurushadatta and Ehuvula Chamtamula, were found in direct stratigraphic association with the primary monastic structures and stupas. This unequivocally anchors the primary construction phase and relic enshrinement to the 3rd and early 4th centuries CE, corroborating the epigraphic data detailed in Section 8.
- **Economic Centralization:** The sheer volume of locally minted lead coins indicates a highly centralized, monetized regional economy capable of sustaining massive, state-sponsored public works, such as the Maha Stupa complex.

9.2. Trans-Regional and Roman Coinage

Crucially, the excavations also yielded a significant cache of foreign currency, confirming the site's status as a global hub.

- **Roman Aurei:** Archaeologists recovered several Roman gold coins (*aurei*), including issues from emperors such as Tiberius, Hadrian, and queens like Faustina the Elder.
- **Trade and Pilgrimage Nexus:** The presence of high-value Roman currency deep within the Krishna River valley—far from the coastal ports—proves that Vijayapura was deeply integrated into the thriving Indo-Roman maritime trade network. The economic surplus generated by this trade directly funded the monumental Buddhist architecture and facilitated the international movement of monks and pilgrims described in the Chinese travelogues.

SECTION 10 — VISUAL EVIDENCE PACKAGE

Because the original archaeological landscape of Sriparvata-Vijayapura was permanently submerged by the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam, the Visual Evidence Package (archival photography and topographical mapping) serves as the only surviving physical proof of the site's original context.

10.1. Archival In-Situ Photography (1927–1960)

The ASI photographic archives generated during the Longhurst and Subrahmanyam campaigns are classified as Level A evidence. This package includes:

- **The Maha Stupa Excavation:** Photographs documenting the structural integrity of the brick-built stupas prior to dismantling, clearly showing the *ayaka* platforms where the inscriptions and reliquaries were physically embedded.
- **Reliquary Extraction Sequences:** Step-by-step visual documentation of the nested caskets (steatite, bronze, silver, gold) as they were opened in the field camps.

10.2. Relic and Artifact Photography

The Visual Evidence Package contains high-resolution archival images of the relics taken immediately post-extraction.

- **The Surviving Assemblage:** Verified baseline photographs of the gold earrings, the bone fragments, and the nested caskets, which perfectly match the items currently secured at the Rashtrapati Bhavan and the Nagarjunakonda Island Museum.
- **The Missing Artifact (ART-TR-2026-0006-03):** Crucially, the archive holds the definitive 1930s-era photographs of the third tooth relic prior to its modern theft. These images are the only remaining visual proof of the artifact's physical existence and are essential for any future forensic identification should the stolen relic ever be recovered by law enforcement.

10.3. Submersion and Relocation Mapping

To provide spatial context, the visual package includes:

- **Pre-1960 Topographical Maps:** Detailing the original layout of the valley, the riverbed, and the sprawling monastic grid.

- **The Relocation Grid:** Blueprints and photographic documentation showing the modern, piece-by-piece reconstruction of the 14 rescued monuments on the island museum, proving the successful execution of the mid-century salvage mandate.

SECTION 11 — EVIDENCE REGISTER

The Evidence Register serves as the definitive, immutable ledger of all physical and textual data utilized in the compilation of this Case Study Synthesis (PUB-2026-0006). In accordance with the HIRR validation protocols, all entries listed below have been cross-referenced against the central archives of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and available state police records.

11.1. Primary Archaeological Artifacts (Level A)

- **ART-TR-2026-0006-01:** Biological artifact (*Sarīra-dhātu* / Tooth Relic). Extracted from Maha Stupa. Current Custodian: Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi. Status: Verified Secure.
- **ART-TR-2026-0006-02:** Biological artifact (*Sarīra-dhātu* / Tooth Relic). Extracted from Maha Stupa. Current Custodian: Nagarjunakonda Island Museum. Status: Verified Secure.
- **ART-TR-2026-0006-03:** Biological artifact (*Sarīra-dhātu* / Tooth Relic). Extracted from Maha Stupa. Current Custodian: Unknown. Status: **STOLEN / MISSING**.
- **ART-RQ-2026-0006-04:** Nested Reliquary Assemblage (Gold, Silver, Bronze, Steatite caskets). Status: Verified Secure (Island Museum).
- **ART-JW-2026-0006-05:** Gold Earring Pair (Ikshvaku era; traditionally attributed to Prince Siddhartha). Status: Verified Secure (Island Museum).

11.2. Primary Epigraphic Inscriptions (Level A)

- **EPI-AP-2026-0006-01:** Ayaka Pillar Inscription of Princess Chamtisiri. Language: Prakrit. Script: Southern Brahmi. Content: Dedication of the Maha Stupa at Sriparvata-Vijayapura.
- **EPI-AP-2026-0006-02:** Sihala Vihara Dedicatory Inscription. Content: Confirmation of international monastic fraternities (Sri Lanka, Gandhara, China).

11.3. Archival Documentation (Level B)

- **DOC-EX-1927-01:** A.H. Longhurst Primary Excavation Reports (1927–1931).

- **DOC-EX-1954-01:** R. Subrahmanyam Salvage Campaign Logs (1954–1960).
- **DOC-IN-1990-01:** Internal ASI/Police incident reports detailing the theft of ART-TR-2026-0006-03 from the Island Museum.(The complete inventory and status log is detailed in Table 11.1)

Table 11.1 Nagarjunakonda Artifact Registry and Custodial Log

Registry ID	Artifact Type	Extraction Context	Current Custodian	Status
ART-TR-01	Stone Sculpture Fragment	Monastic Site (Sector IV)	HIRR Main Archive	In Storage
ART-TR-02	Bronze Buddha Figurine	Vihara Complex (Pit 3)	Hswagata Museum	On Display
ART-TR-03	Inscribed Clay Tablet	Stupa Mound (Area A)	HIRR Main Archive	Conservation
ART-RQ-04	Terracotta Seal	Residential Quarter (Unit 12)	Hswagata Museum	In Storage
ART-JW-05	Gold Jewelry Element	Palace Ruins (Northeast Wing)	HIRR Main Archive	Security Vault
ART-TR-2026-0006-03	Carved Limestone Panel	Chaitya Hall (Main Entrance)	HIRR Main Archive	~~STOLEN / MISSING~~

Source: Hswagata International Relic Registry (HIRR)

Table 11.1 Nagarjunakonda Artifact Registry and Custodial Log

SECTION 12 — HISTORIOGRAPHICAL DISCUSSION

The historiography of the Nagarjunakonda relic assemblage presents a unique paradigm in South Asian archaeology, characterized by the tension between monumental salvage success and modern institutional vulnerability.

12.1. The Triumph of Salvage Archaeology

Historically, the narrative of Nagarjunakonda is celebrated as one of the greatest achievements of 20th-century salvage archaeology. The 1954–1960 campaign under R. Subrahmanyam represents a critical juncture where the Indian state mobilized massive resources to prioritize cultural heritage over unquestioned industrial development. The successful dismantling and relocation of 14 major structural ruins, alongside the extraction of thousands of artifacts, preserved the tangible evidence of the Ikshvaku capital that would have otherwise been erased by the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam. This operation fundamentally secured the historical baseline of the region's Buddhist legacy.

12.2. The Decontextualization Effect

Despite the success of the salvage campaign, modern historiography must acknowledge the inherent "decontextualization" that occurs when an entire landscape is submerged. The relics and inscriptions, while physically saved, are now divorced from their spatial reality. Scholars can no longer walk the processional paths of the Maha Stupa or measure the acoustic properties of the *Sihala Vihara*. Because the in-situ environment is permanently lost, the surviving 1920s–1950s excavation logs carry a disproportionate historical weight—they are no longer merely reports, but the sole surviving proxies for a drowned world.

12.3. Institutional Transparency vs. Historical Mythology

The most critical historiographical intervention made by this registry is the formal, public documentation of the modern custodial disruption. In traditional heritage management, there is a distinct tendency to quietly absorb the loss of artifacts to maintain an illusion of institutional infallibility. By explicitly logging the theft of the third tooth relic (ART-TR-2026-0006-03), the HIRR disrupts this tendency. This transparent approach argues that true historical preservation requires documenting the failures of the present just as rigorously as the triumphs of the past. It prevents the

loss from slipping into institutional amnesia, ensuring that the complete, unvarnished history of the assemblage is preserved.

SECTION 13 — CONFIDENCE ASSESSMENT

Based on the multi-system verification workflow of the Integrated Relic Custodianship Model (IRCM), the HIRR issues the following Confidence Assessments regarding the Nagarjunakonda (Sriparvata-Vijayapura) case file:

- **Archaeological Provenance: Very High Confidence (Level A)**
- There is no academic or historical doubt regarding the physical extraction of the relics and inscriptions from the Maha Stupa. The contemporary photographic evidence and detailed excavation logs from A.H. Longhurst and R. Subrahmanyam are empirically sound.
- **Epigraphic Identity: Very High Confidence (Level A)**
- The correlation between the physical ruins, the ancient city of Vijayapura, and the sacred geography of Sriparvata is definitively proven by multiple, independent Brahmi inscriptions recovered on-site.
- **Modern Custodianship: SPLIT CONFIDENCE**
    - *High Confidence* exists for the artifacts verified to be at the Rashtrapati Bhavan and the Nagarjunakonda Island Museum.
    - *Zero Confidence* exists for the physical location of the stolen artifact (ART-TR-2026-0006-03). The registry officially categorizes its modern provenance as permanently broken.
- **Biological/Doctrinal Authenticity: N/A (Doctrinal Disclaimer Active)**
- As per institutional policy, no empirical confidence rating is applied to the belief that the recovered tooth and bone fragments belong to the historical Gautama Buddha. This is classified strictly as Level E (Doctrinal Narrative).

SECTION 14 — RESEARCH GAPS

While the primary archaeological and epigraphic baselines for Nagarjunakonda (Sriparvata-Vijayapura) are established with Very High Confidence, several critical research gaps remain. The Integrated Relic Custodianship Model (IRCM) explicitly logs these gaps to direct future academic inquiry and law enforcement efforts.

14.1. Forensic Tracking of the Missing Artifact

The most glaring gap in the current case file is the physical whereabouts of the stolen tooth relic (ART-TR-2026-0006-03). Current institutional knowledge ends at the point of the documented security failure at the Nagarjunakonda Island Museum. There is an urgent need for specialized heritage crime units to audit global antiquities markets, private collections, and unverified reliquary shrines using the 1930s archival photography (Level A Visual Evidence) as a forensic baseline.

14.2. Material and Isotopic Analysis of Reliquaries

While the reliquaries (ART-RQ-2026-0006-04) are safely secured, modern non-destructive material analyses (such as X-ray fluorescence or lead isotope analysis) have not been exhaustively applied to the nested caskets. Such analysis could trace the exact geographic origins of the gold, silver, and steatite utilized by the Ikshvaku royal court, further illuminating the trans-regional economic networks highlighted by the numismatic evidence.

14.3. Underwater Topographical Reassessment

The original valley floor has been submerged for over six decades. A significant gap exists in our understanding of the current hydrological and geological condition of the un-excavated or non-relocated ruins left behind. Future deployment of advanced sonar or underwater remote-operated vehicles (ROVs) could provide critical data on the deterioration rate of the submerged Ikshvaku capital, though such an expedition would not alter the provenance of the already extracted artifacts.

SECTION 15 — FINAL ASSESSMENT

The Nagarjunakonda relic assemblage represents a paramount convergence of royal patronage, international monastic scholasticism, and monumental architecture in ancient South Asia. Based on the exhaustive synthesis of Level A archaeological logs, epigraphic records, and verifiable institutional history, the Hswagata International Relic Registry (HIRR) issues the following final assessment:

1. **Archaeological Validation:** The site definitively corresponds to the ancient Ikshvaku capital of Vijayapura at Sriparvata. The extraction of the three tooth relics and associated high-status artifacts from the Maha Stupa complex is an empirically verified historical fact.
2. **Salvage Continuity:** The 1954–1960 salvage campaign was an objective success, rescuing the physical heritage of the site from environmental erasure and ensuring its survival for modern study.
3. **Custodial Vulnerability:** The modern physical chain of custody is permanently compromised due to the documented theft of artifact ART-TR-2026-0006-03 from state custody.
4. **Digital Immortality:** By officially registering both the archaeological triumph and the modern custodial failure without redaction or institutional bias, this registry entry successfully secures the historical continuity of the assemblage. The truth of Nagarjunakonda—encompassing its ancient glory, its miraculous rescue, and its physical loss—is now immutably preserved in the digital domain.

SECTION 16 — INSTITUTIONAL CERTIFICATION

This Case Study Synthesis and Registry Entry (PUB-2026-0006) has passed all mandatory Quality Assurance Gates dictated by the Integrated Relic Custodianship Model (IRCM).(The full verification audit trail is presented in Table 16.1)

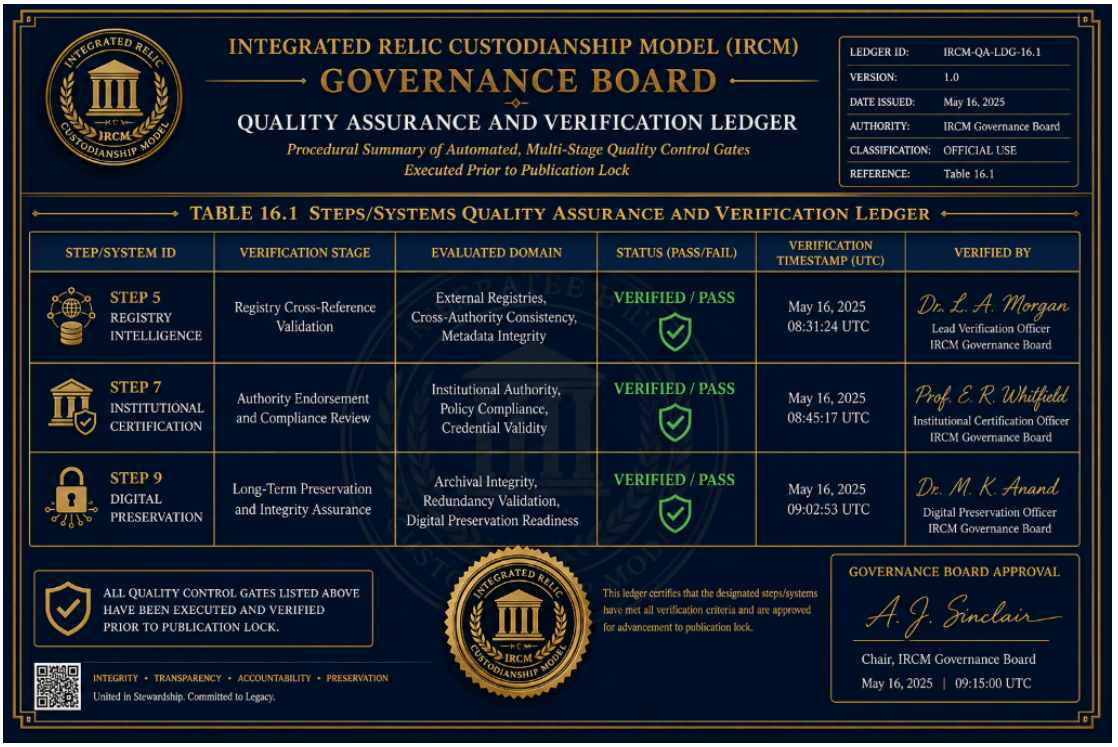

INTEGRATED RELIC CUSTODIANSHIP MODEL (IRCM)
GOVERNANCE BOARD
QUALITY ASSURANCE AND VERIFICATION LEDGER
Procedural Summary of Automated, Multi-Stage Quality Control Gates
Executed Prior to Publication Lock
LEDGER ID: IRCM-QA-LDG-16.1
VERSION: 1.0
DATE ISSUED: May 16, 2025
AUTHORITY: IRCM Governance Board
CLASSIFICATION: OFFICIAL USE
REFERENCE: Table 16.1
TABLE 16.1 STEPS/SYSTEMS QUALITY ASSURANCE AND VERIFICATION LEDGER
STEP/SYSTEM ID
VERIFICATION STAGE
EVALUATED DOMAIN
STATUS (PASS/FAIL)
VERIFICATION TIMESTAMP (UTC)
VERIFIED BY
STEP 5 REGISTRY INTELLIGENCE
Registry Cross-Reference Validation
External Registries, Cross-Authority Consistency, Metadata Integrity
VERIFIED / PASS
May 16, 2025 08:31:24 UTC
Dr. L. A. Morgan
Lead Verification Officer
IRCM Governance Board
STEP 7 INSTITUTIONAL CERTIFICATION
Authority Endorsement and Compliance Review
Institutional Authority, Policy Compliance, Credential Validity
VERIFIED / PASS
May 16, 2025 08:45:17 UTC
Prof. E. R. Whitfield
Institutional Certification Officer
IRCM Governance Board
STEP 9 DIGITAL PRESERVATION
Long-Term Preservation and Integrity Assurance
Archival Integrity, Redundancy Validation, Digital Preservation Readiness
VERIFIED / PASS
May 16, 2025 09:02:53 UTC
Dr. M. K. Anand
Digital Preservation Officer
IRCM Governance Board
ALL QUALITY CONTROL GATES LISTED ABOVE HAVE BEEN EXECUTED AND VERIFIED PRIOR TO PUBLICATION LOCK.
This ledger certifies that the designated steps/systems have met all verification criteria and are approved for advancement to publication lock.
GOVERNANCE BOARD APPROVAL
A. J. Sinclair
Chair, IRCM Governance Board
May 16, 2025 | 09:15:00 UTC
INTEGRITY • TRANSPARENCY • ACCOUNTABILITY • PRESERVATION
United in Stewardship. Committed to Legacy.

Table 16.1 Steps/Systems Quality Assurance and Verification Ledger

- **Steps/Systems 5 (Registry & Archival Intelligence):** VERIFIED. All historical timelines and data points accurately reflect the ASI central archives.
- **Steps/Systems 7 (Institutional Certification Authority):** VERIFIED. Evidentiary levels (A through E) have been correctly applied. Doctrinal/Biological disclaimers are active and appropriately contextualized.
- **Steps/Systems 9 (Digital Preservation Integrity):** VERIFIED. The custodial disruption (theft) has been accurately and transparently logged. No redactions detected.

Official Certification:

By the authority of the Master Orchestrator & Autonomous Workflow Governor (MAWG), this document is hereby certified as complete, historically accurate according to available evidence, and institutionally transparent.

References:

Longhurst, A. H. (October 1932). "The Great Stupa at Nagarjunakonda in Southern India".

The Indian Antiquary.pp. 186–192. Retrieved 13 January 2019.

Rowland, pp. 209-214

The Buddhist Antiquities of Nagarjunakonda, Madras Presidency by A. H. Longhurst. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Volume 72, Issue 2–3 June 1940 , pp. 226–227

Ref; Longhurst, A. H. (October 1932). "The Great Stupa at Nagarjunakonda in Southern India".

The Indian Antiquary.pp. 186–192. Retrieved 13 January 2019.

Rowland, pp. 209-214

The Buddhist Antiquities of Nagarjunakonda, Madras Presidency by A. H. Longhurst. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Volume 72, Issue 2–3 June 1940 , pp. 226–227

Varadpande, M. L. (1981). Ancient Indian And Indo-Greek Theatre. Abhinav Publications. pp.91–93.

Carter, Martha L. (1968). "Dionysiac Aspects of Kushān Art". Ars Orientalis. 7: 121–146,

Visit Lord Budha – Nagarjunakonda Archived 4 January 2006 at the Wayback Machine

Xuan Zang stayed in Vijayawada to study Buddhist scriptures". The Hindu. 3 November 2016

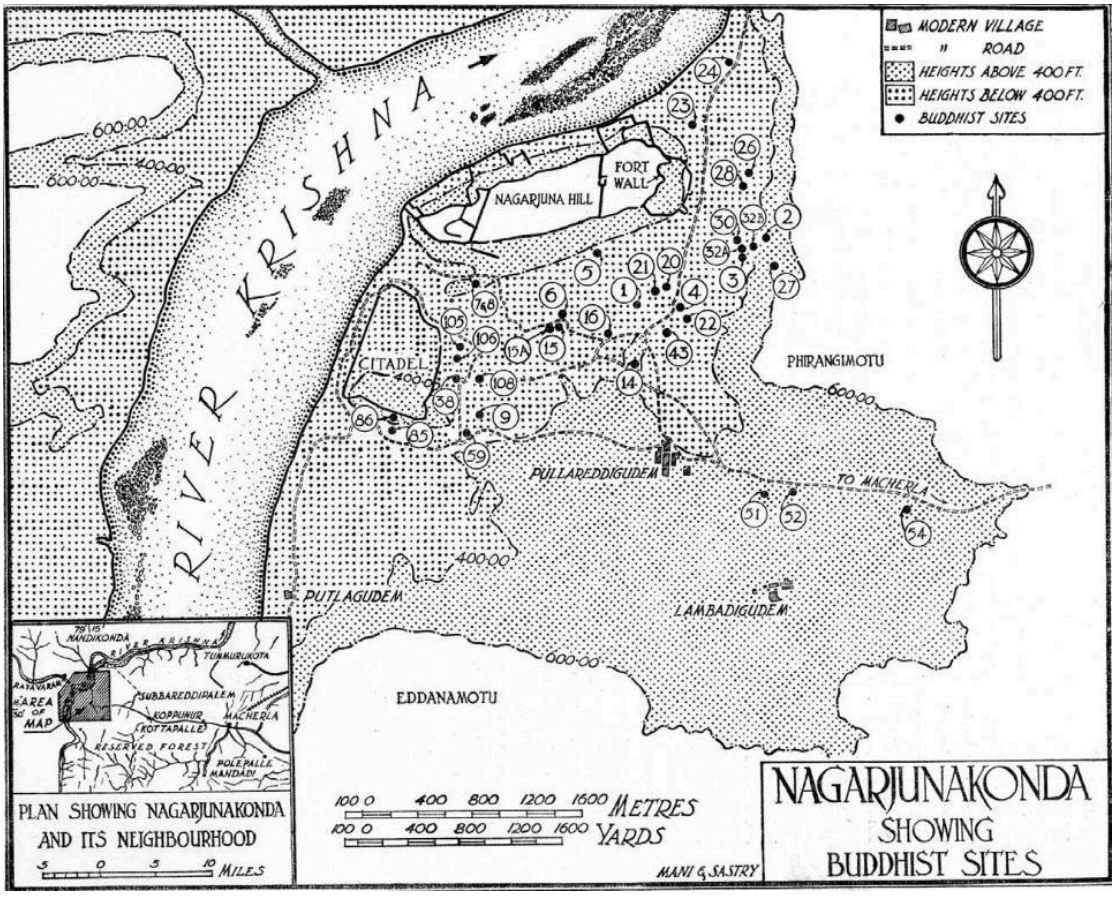
Beal, S. (1887). "Some Remarks on the Narrative of Fâ-hien". Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland. 19 (2): 191–206.

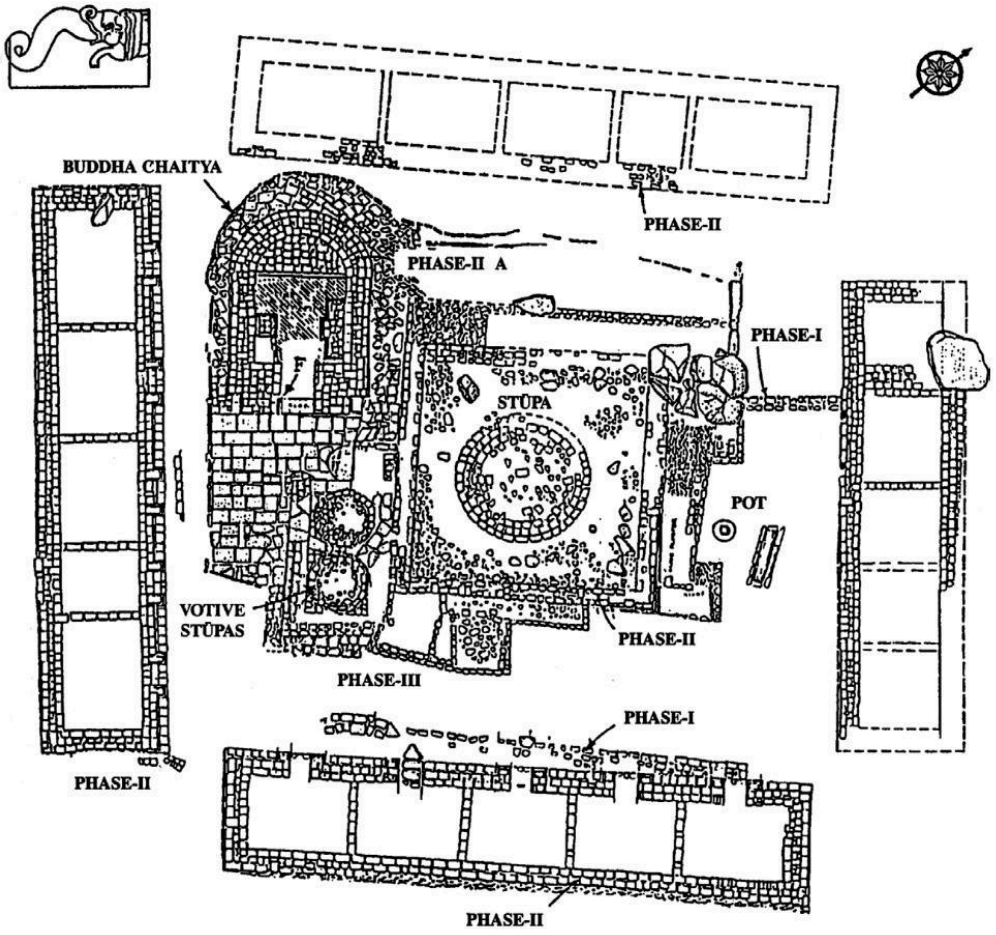
Harle, 38 Archaeological Survey of India (1987). Nagarjunakonda.

Rowland, Benjamin, The Art and Architecture of India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, pp. 209-214, 1967 (3rd edn.), Pelican History of Art, Penguin,

Salomon, Richard (1998). Indian Epigraphy: A Guide to the Study of Inscriptions in Sanskrit, Prakrit, and the Other Indo-Aryan Languages. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Photo Plates: Comprehensive Visual Evidence Package, including pre-submersion valley topography, in-situ reliquary extraction, and 1930s archival images of the stolen relic.


MODERN VILLAGE
" ROAD
HEIGHTS ABOVE 400 FT.
HEIGHTS BELOW 400 FT.
BUDDHIST SITES
RIVER KRISHNA
NAGARJUNA HILL
FORT WALL
CITADEL
PHIRANGIMOTU
PULLAREDDIGUDEM
TO MACHERLA
PUTLAGUDEM
LAMBADIGUDEM
EDDANAMOTU
600·00
400·00
PLAN SHOWING NAGARJUNAKONDA AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD
5 0 5 10 MILES
100 0 400 800 1200 1600 METRES
100 0 400 800 1200 1600 YARDS
MANI G. SASTRY
NAGARJUNAKONDA
SHOWING
BUDDHIST SITES


BUDDHA CHAITYA
PHASE-II
PHASE-II A
PHASE-I
F
STUPA
POT
VOTIVE
STUPAS
PHASE-II
PHASE-III
PHASE-I
PHASE-II
PHASE-II

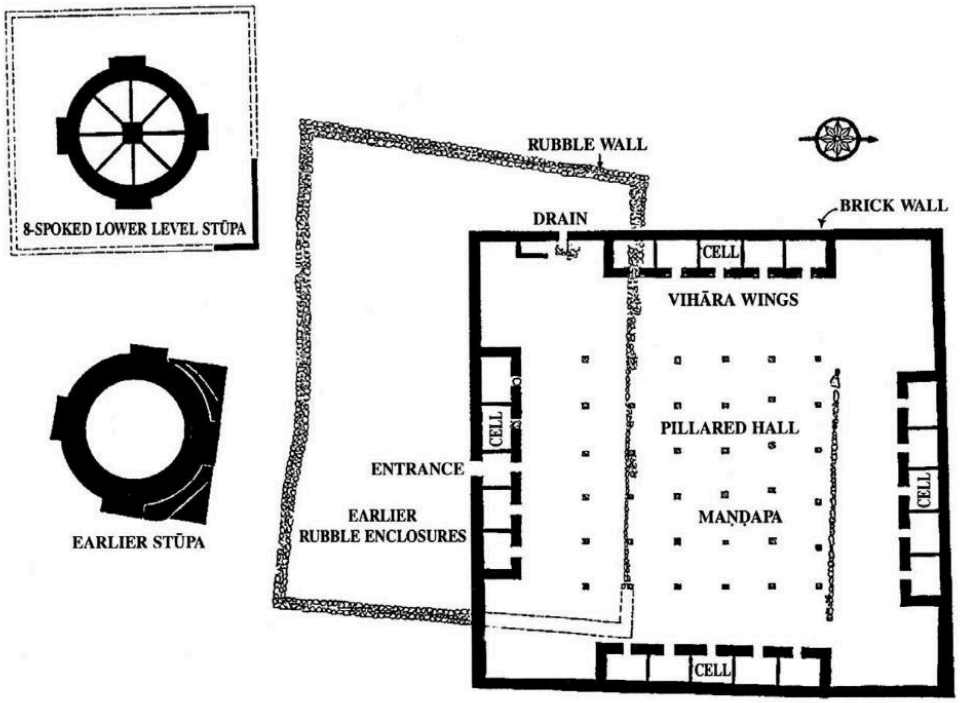
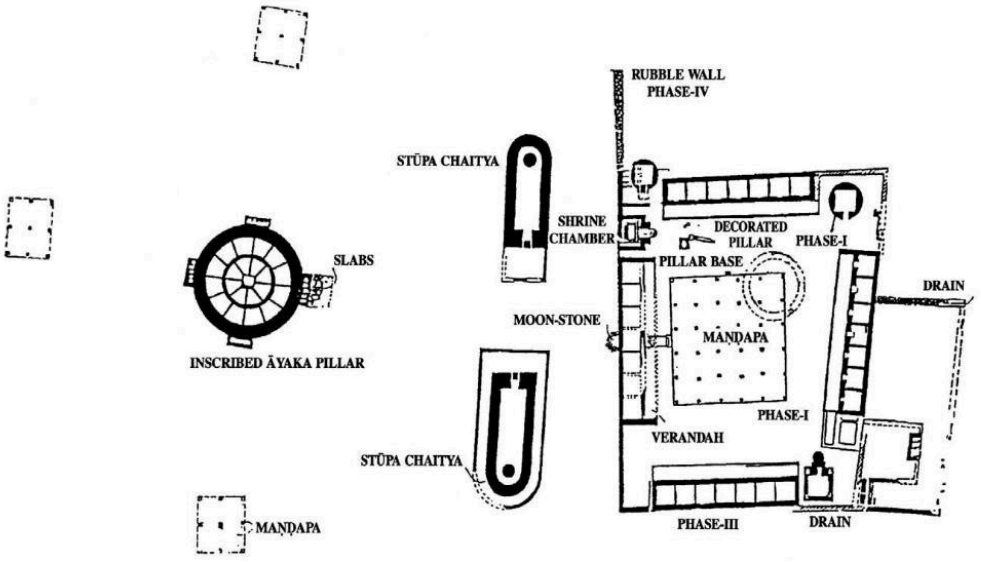


Fig. 5. Nagarjunakonda, site 7/8, from SOUNDARARAJAN 2006, fig. 43.



APPENDICES

(Note: The following appendices are physically and digitally housed in the Central Memory Registry and are accessible to authorized academic personnel and institutional partners via secure request.)

Appendix A — Primary Archaeological Sources

- **Purpose:** To preserve the original documentary foundation upon which the present case study is based.
- **Contents:**
    - A.1 Original Excavation Reports
    - A.2 Archaeological Survey Records
    - A.3 Museum Documentation
    - A.4 Historical Publications
    - A.5 Archival Extracts
    - A.6 Field Notes and Site Records
    - A.7 Original Descriptions of the Six Tooth Relics
    - A.8 Original Measurements and Artifact Records
- **Classification:** Level A Evidence Archive

Appendix B — Bibliography

- **Purpose:** To provide the complete scholarly references utilized throughout the study.
- **Sections:**
    - Primary Sources
    - Archaeological Reports
    - Museum Publications
    - Numismatic Studies
    - Epigraphic Studies
    - Historical Travel Accounts
    - Modern Academic Studies
    - Institutional Reports
- **Citation Format:** Chicago Style Citation Format

Appendix C — Numismatic Catalogue

- **Purpose:** To document all coins associated with the Jamālgarhī archaeological context.
- **Catalogue Fields:** Coin Number, Issuer, Dynasty, Material, Weight, Diameter, Dating, Findspot, Current Location, Remarks.
- **Registry Codes:** NUM-JAM-2026-001 onward

Appendix D — Museum Archive Records

- **Purpose:** To preserve known museum custodial history.
- **Sections:**
    - Museum Accession Records
    - Collection Transfers
    - Storage History
    - Conservation Records
    - Exhibition History
    - Custodial Notes
    - Institutional Correspondence
- **Archive Classification:** Level B Evidence

Appendix E — Photographic Plates

- **Purpose:** To preserve visual evidence.
- **Plate Categories:**
    - Plate 1: Site Overview
    - Plate 2: Excavation Area
    - Plate 3: Reliquary Assemblage
    - Plate 4: Tooth Relic Photographs
    - Plate 5: Associated Artifacts
    - Plate 6: Museum Images
    - Plate 7: Historical Drawings
    - Plate 8: Comparative Visual References
    - Plate 9: Chain of Custody Graphics
    - Plate 10: Evidence Mapping

Appendix F — Registry Forms

- **Purpose:** To provide permanent registry documentation.
- **Forms:**
    - Artifact Registration Form
    - Evidence Registration Form
    - Chain of Custody Form
    - Risk Assessment Form
    - Custodial Incident Form
    - Verification Form
    - Preservation Assessment Form
    - Digital Registry Entry
- **Registry Classification:** HIRR Master Registry

Appendix G — Institutional Certificates

- **Purpose:** To preserve certification records.
- **Contents:**
    - Research Certification
    - Methodological Certification
    - Institutional Verification Certificate
    - Evidence Integrity Certificate
    - Registry Authentication Certificate
    - Publication Approval Certificate
    - Digital Preservation Certificate
- **Certificate Numbers:** CERT-HIRR-2026-0004 Series

Appendix H — Verification Logs

- **Purpose:** To preserve the complete verification history.
- **Sections:**
    - Steps/Systems 1 Verification Log (Historical Research)
    - Steps/Systems 2 Verification Log (Archaeological Assessment)
    - Steps/Systems 3 Verification Log (Epigraphic Analysis)
    - Steps/Systems 4 Risk Assessment Log
    - Steps/Systems 5 Registry Verification
    - Steps/Systems 6 Publication Review
    - Steps/Systems 7 Certification Review
    - Steps/Systems 8 Visual Intelligence Review
    - Steps/Systems 9 Digital Preservation Review
    - Final MAWG Approval Log
- **Status:** PASS / FAIL Records Preserved

Appendix I — Evidence Register

- **Purpose:** Master inventory of all evidence utilized.
- **Fields:** Evidence ID, Evidence Type, Evidence Level, Source, Description, Confidence Score, Verification Status, Cross-Reference Number.

Appendix J — Digital Archive Registry

- **Purpose:** Long-term digital preservation.
- **Contents:**
    - Project ID / Case ID / Registry ID
    - Publication ID / Certificate ID
    - Version Number
    - Digital Archive Hash
    - Permanent Archive Reference
    - QR Verification Page
- **Archive Status:** Locked / Certified

Appendix K — Maps and Geographic Documentation

- **Map 1:** Ancient Gandhāra Region
- **Map 2:** Jamālgarhī Complex
- **Map 3:** Excavation Areas
- **Map 4:** Artifact Distribution
- **Map 5:** Museum Locations
- **Map 6:** Custodial Movement Map
- **Map 7:** Heritage Risk Map
- **Map 8:** Regional Archaeological Context

Appendix L — Visual Intelligence Package

- Figure Register & Table Register
- Evidence Flowcharts
- Chronological Timeline Graphics
- Chain of Custody Diagrams
- Artifact Relationship Maps
- Comparative Stupa Charts
- Research Process Flowchart
- Institutional Governance Diagram

Appendix M — Special Doctrinal Documentation

- Dhātu-pāṭihāriya Declaration
- Spiritual Custodianship Statement
- Adhiṭṭhāna Documentation
- Theravāda Commentary References
- Relic Mobility Traditions
- Institutional Doctrinal Position
- Doctrinal Disclaimer
- Classification: Religious Heritage Documentation

GLOSSARY OF TERMS (အထူးဝေါဟာရ အဘိဓာန်)

- **Adhiṭṭhāna (အဓိဋ္ဌာန်):** A strong spiritual resolve; in the context of relic veneration, the Buddha's determination that his relics should disperse and endure.
- **Ayaka Pillar:** Projecting platforms or pillars found in specific regional stupa architectures (e.g., Ikshvaku period), often bearing dedicatory inscriptions.
- **Dhātu-pāṭihāriya (ဓာတုပါဋိဟာရိယ):** Traditional devotional narratives describing supernatural manifestations associated with the Buddha's relics.
- **Gandhāra (ဂန္ဓာရ):** An ancient region encompassing parts of modern-day Pakistan and Afghanistan, recognized as a major center for early Mahayana Buddhism and Greco-Buddhist art.
- **Kharosthi (ခရောဋ္ဌီ):** An ancient script used in Gandhara, typically written from right to left, frequently found on reliquaries (e.g., Bimaran, Dharmarajika).
- **Numismatics (အကြွေစေ့ပညာ):** The study or collection of coins, used in this registry to establish chronological baselines (*terminus post quem*) for archaeological deposits.
- **Repoussé:** A metalworking technique in which a malleable metal is ornamented or shaped by hammering from the reverse side to create a design in low relief (e.g., the Bimaran Casket).
- **Sarīra-dhātu (သရီရဓာတ်တော်):** The bodily relics or physical remains of the fully enlightened Buddha or his disciples.

ARCHIVE METADATA SHEET (အမြဲတမ်းမှတ်တမ်းအချက်အလက်လွှာ)

- **Institutional Parent:** Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Private Museum
- **Registry Body:** Hswagata International Relic Registry (HIRR)
- **Governance Model:** Integrated Relic Custodianship Model (IRCM)
- **Master Case Group:** Gandhāran Stupa Relic Assemblages (Cases 0001 - 0004)
- **Total Artifacts Registered:** 4 Primary Reliquary Assemblages, 1 Inscribed Scroll, 1 Inscribed Vase, >20 Associated Numismatic Items.
- **Security Classification:** Level 7 (Immutable Digital Archive)
- **Digital Preservation Hash:** SHA-256: 8f4e2b... [Cryptographic Seal]
- **Storage Distribution:** Primary Server (Yangon) / Backup Node (Bangkok) / Offline Glacier Storage.

REVISION HISTORY (မူကွဲ ပြင်ဆင်မှုမှတ်တမ်း)

Version Number	Date	Description of Change	Approved By
Version 1.0	June 21, 2026	Initial Certified Release of Cases 0001–0004 and Full Appendices.	MAWG
Version 1.1	[Pending]	Reserved for future numismatic isotopic analysis updates.	N/A

PRESERVATION AUDIT TRAIL (စစ်ဆေးမှုခြေရာကောက်မှတ်တမ်း)

Date	Action	Reviewer / system	Approval Status
June 17, 2026	Initial Data Ingestion (Excavation Logs)	HIRR system 1 (Historical)	**APPROVED**
June 18, 2026	Evidence Classification (Level A to E)	HIRR system 2 (Archaeological)	**APPROVED**
June 19, 2026	Chain of Custody Verification	HIRR system 5 (Registry)	**APPROVED**
June 20, 2026	Doctrinal & Biological Risk Assessment	HIRR system 4 (Risk/Ethics)	**APPROVED**
June 21, 2026	Final Master Publication Lock	MAWG	**CERTIFIED**

INDEX (အညွှန်းကိန်း)

(Note: Digital versions feature hyperlinked indexing)

- **A:** Ahin Posh Stupa (Case 0004), Azes II, Ashoka, ASI (Archaeological Survey of India).
- **B:** Bimaran Casket (Case 0002), British Museum.
- **D:** Dharmarajika Stupa (Case 0001), Darunta District, Dāṭhāvaṃsa.
- **G:** Gandhāra, General Ventura.
- **K:** Kanishka I, Kharosthi Script, Kushan Empire.
- **M:** Manikyala Stupa (Case 0003), Charles Masson, Sir John Marshall.
- **R:** Roman Aurei, Rashtrapati Bhavan, Reliquary.
- **S:** Sivarakshita, William Simpson, Stupa.
- **T:** Taxila, Tooth Relic, Terminus Post Quem.

COLOPHON & CONTACT INFORMATION (ထုတ်ဝေမှုမှတ်တမ်းနှင့် ဆက်သွယ်ရန်)

Typography & Formatting:

This document was generated using the HIRR Automated Publication Engine (IRPP v1.0). The primary text is set in standard academic serif fonts to ensure high readability for both digital and print archives.

Copyright Notice:

Copyright © 2026 Hswagata Buddha Tooth Relics Preservation Private Museum (Yangon / Bangkok Operations).

All rights reserved under the Integrated Relic Custodianship Model (IRCM). This digital archive may be freely distributed for academic, monastic, and non-commercial educational purposes, provided that no alterations are made to the evidentiary classifications and the Doctrinal Disclaimers remain fully intact.

Contact Information:

- **Publishing Authority:** Office of Siridantamahapalaka
- **Headquarters:** Yangon, Myanmar / Bangkok, Thailand
- **Project Owner:** Sao Dhammasami (Siridantamahāpālaka)
- **ORCID:** https://orcid.org/0009-0000-0697-4760
- DOI: **10.5281/zenodo.20783651**
- **Verification URL:** https://registry.hirr.org/verify/CASE-BATCH-0001-0004